

PUBLIC RELATIONS OF LOCAL HOUSING AUTHORITIES

A Committee Report on a Vital Function of Local Public Housing Agencies

Publication
Number N108
Price \$1.00

July, 1939

Reprinted February, 1940
Reprinted with slight revisions, March, 1941

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF HOUSING OFFICIALS
1313 East 60th Street, Chicago, Illinois

C O N T E N T S

	Page
FOREWORD	iv
SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	vi
Section I - THE PROBLEM AND OBJECTIVE DEFINED	1
Defining Public Relations	1
Certain Generalizations Applicable	1
Basic Public Approval to Build on	2
Section II - GENERAL GUIDES AND PRINCIPLES	3
Responsibility in Public Relations	3
Arm Your Friends and Disarm Your Critics	4
Apparent vs. Real Reasons for Opposition	4
Soothing rather than Spiting the Aggrieved	5
Speak Their Language	5
Keeping the House in Order	6
Perspective for Housing	6
Guarding against "Political" Brand	8
Section III - METHODS	9
Basic Approach	9
Make It Human	9
Educate the "Official Public"	10
The Chairman and the Executive Director	10
Everyone Counts	11
Continuity of Program	11
Special Groups	11
Sources of Conservative Support	14
Publicity Mediums	16
Test the Results	19
Reporters Are Human	20
Centralizing Information	21
Services to Others	21
Approach Housing Consumers	22
Advisory Committees	23
Past Experience	23
Guides in Their Use	24
Size	25
Correspondence and Telephone	26
Basic Information in the Schools	26
Public Relations Director	27
Section IV - PROBLEMS OF ESTABLISHED AGENCIES	28
PWA's Housing	28
Housing Costs and Benefits	28
Old Public Relations	30
There is Opposition	31

	Page
Section V - PROBLEMS OF NEW AUTHORITIES	32
Avoid Identification of Program with Early Experience	32
Cooperation with Other Agencies	33
Relationship with Welfare and Housing Inspection Agencies	33
Competition - with Whom?	34
First Contacts	34
Tenant Relocation	35
Temporary and Borrowed Employees	35
Section VI - ANNUAL AND OTHER REPORTS	37
Need for Study of Official Requirements	37
BIBLIOGRAPHY	38
APPENDIX:	
A. Relationships of USHA Information Division and Local Housing Authorities	A1
B. Sample Educational Materials	B1

FOREWORD

It is the custom of the day to discuss everything from "cabbages to kings" in terms of what they do or mean to democracy. Some of this discussion is specious, superficial, and inevitably defers a needed reorienting of American thought. Nevertheless, it is the keynote of this preliminary pamphlet on the relations between those administering a great new public enterprise and the citizens, organized and individual. It may be particularly fitting to sound the democratic keynote in localities that now are shouldering the long neglected task of assuring every one of their members the physical environment for a decent, healthful family and community life. Unless the chief facts, problems and issues are laid clearly before all intelligent citizens in those areas and their informed criticisms and mature opinions reflected in housing administration, local housing authorities will have been partial failures as agencies of democratic government. Technical skill and administrative competence of other kinds, highly essential though they be, cannot be satisfactory substitutes for sound, sensible, continuous public relations.

Little thought is required to see that the importance, as well as the difficulties of public relations, are greatest in public undertakings that are new, that entail large public investments and considerable public expenditures, and that touch directly and intimately the lives of large groups in the population. Local authority housing qualifies in each of these categories. In addition, in this country public housing has come after no long, patient educational campaign. Rather it started with a rush in 1933 as a part of the program to beat the depression. In the last twenty months it has expanded notably and changed fundamentally in administrative theory and practice. Where could one find on the American scene a combination of circumstances that would accentuate more forcibly the urgent need and fundamental importance of public relations?

For the same reasons, the characteristics of good public relations practice by local housing authorities differ, at least in emphasis, from those of older and more stabilized agencies. For example, publicity and direct "selling" for housing programs must be, for some years to come, a larger part of the public relations of a local authority than, say for the city engineers' department or the fire department. As this report constantly emphasizes, however, public relations of housing authorities are much more than publicity. They include all the steps and means by which a growing public enterprise informs its stockholders, the citizens, its customers, the poorly housed families of low income, and its associates, other public officials, of what its purposes and methods are, of what it has done and is doing, of what direct and secondary benefits or troubles have been realized, and of what it plans and sees ahead.

This pamphlet has been prepared by NAHO's Committee on Public Relations of Housing Authorities for 1938 and 1939, with substantial aid from the staff. The members of this Committee for 1939 are:

Chairman: Andrew S. Iddings, Chairman, Dayton Metropolitan Housing Authority

Secretary: Allan C. Williams, Executive Secretary, Illinois State Housing Board

Forrest J. Alvin, Executive Director, Covington Municipal Housing Commission
W. T. Anderson, Vice-Chairman, Macon Housing Authority
John Carroll, Chairman, Massachusetts State Housing Board; Member, Boston
Housing Authority
O. W. L. Coffin, Secretary, Ohio State Housing Board
Sergei N. Grimm, Executive Director, Syracuse Housing Authority
John R. Ellingston, Director, Informational Service Division, USHA
Harold A. Lett, Member, Newark Housing Authority
C. F. Palmer, Chairman, Atlanta Housing Authority
Boris Shiskin, Housing Committee A. F. of L.
Anthony Wayne Smith, Executive Secretary, CIO Committee on Housing
Frank E. Spain, Chairman, Housing Authority on the Birmingham District
Miss Elizabeth Wood, Executive Secretary, Chicago Housing Authority

All of last year's Committee are serving again this year, except Mr. John Ihlder, Executive Officer of the Alley Dwelling Authority, who as chairman during 1938 contributed much to many parts of this publication. This year his major services to NAHO are being given through our Joint Committee on Welfare and Housing with the American Public Welfare Association. To this year's secretary, Mr. Allan C. Williams, goes much of the credit for rounding up the work and pushing it to publication.

For the sake of the record, let me say again here that NAHO does not try to tell any community what its basic housing policy should be. We are anxious, however, to help in any way we can the duly authorized administrative officials in housing. This report has been prepared because public relations have been a slighted and underemphasized part of local authority administration. Signs of change in this can now be seen; we hope that this pamphlet will help by defining the problems and outlining practical methods. We want suggestions for additions, revisions and other improvements.

FOREWORD TO 1941 EDITION

The changes in this edition include the addition of a Summary of the Report (page vi); three more items in the Bibliography (page 38); the re-writing of Appendix A under the title "Relationship of USHA Information Division and Local Housing Authorities," by Charles E. V. Prins, Director of Information for USHA; and the addition of four pages (B⁷, B⁸, B⁹, and B¹⁰) to Appendix B to illustrate recent educational material.

March, 1941

Coleman Woodbury

SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

The Problem and Objective Defined

Good public relations result in favorable acceptance of an agency's program by the public and improvements in the program to meet criticisms and new needs.

A job well done is not sufficient unless the public understands something of the problem and the accomplishment.

General Guides and Principles

Tell the story simply and through all available channels.

Seek no publicity merely for its own sake.

The public nature of housing makes a local authority more responsible to citizens than are the individual members of the housing authority in their usual private businesses.

Supply information to both friends and opponents and use well informed friends to refute unjust claims of opponents.

Find real reasons for opposition.

Speak the language of those to whom your message is directed.

Keep your own house in order lest internal conflict detract from public confidence.

Face the subsidy question squarely and do not permit it to become synonymous with tax exemption.

Stress the business-like and nonpartisan nature of the authority.

Methods

Make public relations a definitely recognized activity of the authority.

Use "Hollywood" methods with care.

Stress the human side.

Cultivate good working relations with other public officials.

Use chairman as the chief spokesman for important news and the chief executive or someone designated by him for routine and secondary activities.

Impressions made by all staff members whose work involves contacts with the public are important.

Investigate possible contacts by groups to avoid missing relationships useful to the authority.

Seek support within groups normally conservative or critical about authority's program.

Frank and friendly attitudes toward reporters pay.

Centralize source of important information.

Seek ways of serving other public or private agencies.

Stress consumer angles.

Use advisory committees with well defined powers as a means of broadening authority contacts.

Problems of Established Agencies

Proper evaluation of PWA-built housing projects is important.

Be careful not to exaggerate claims of demonstrable economic benefits of housing developments to local government.

Problems of New Authorities

Avoid identifying the local authority solely with the USHA-aided program or stressing "no expense to community."

Close cooperation with welfare and housing inspection agencies at outset is very desirable.

Land acquisition and relocation of site occupants afford early opportunities for some direct impression on public opinion.

Annual and Other Reports

The authority's annual report may be used as a valuable educational publication. Consider (a) its conformity with statutory reporting requirements and (b), the desirability of avoiding lengthy statistical material, or if necessary, publishing this as an appendix not used for general educational distribution.

PUBLIC RELATIONS OF LOCAL HOUSING AUTHORITIES

Section I - THE PROBLEM AND OBJECTIVE DEFINED

This committee has been organized and this report has been prepared for two reasons: First, because mistakes have been made in many phases of the housing movement which might have been prevented in the past and certainly can be avoided in the future by an understanding of the public relations principles; and second, because the tremendous increase in the number of local housing authorities has created the problem of educating new board members and staff members in the specialized field of public housing.

Defining Public Relations

It is not easy to give an exact definition to the phrase "public relations." Literally, of course, it says relations with the public, but the phrase has been given a special connotation in recent years by the discovery of general principles and techniques which have virtually created a new social art. For our purposes, it is perhaps best approached by the statement that an institution is handling public relations successfully if the public (or that portion of the public which influences or is influenced by the institution) has a clear conception of its aims and methods and is favorable to the program.

Viewed thus broadly, it is apparent that a public relations policy is not a magical device -- a rather common misapprehension which has arisen as a result of spectacular publicity operations in certain commercial and political fields. Applied to a housing authority, we see that a successful public relations policy must be an integral part of the institution -- a social process which works both ways, affecting the public and affecting the institution. In the long run, a housing authority could not maintain good public relations if it were, for example, dishonest, stupid, inefficient, unadaptable to changing local conditions, or in any way falling short of adequate service to the community. On the other hand, an authority might be honest, intelligent (in its technical duties) and efficient, but still fail to achieve a constructive public relationship because of failure to understand the modern techniques of social intercourse and their importance in attitude formation.

Certain Generalizations Applicable

This report is not intended to be a public relations manual for housing authorities, since it cannot pretend to give a final or specific answer to every detailed problem of every community. Nevertheless, there are many generalizations made below which are applicable to all authorities, regardless of the size of their task or state of maturity of their program. It is the hope of the committee that the report may be useful as a sort of working outline and reference, to be revised from time to time in light of new problems and new experience.

It is clearly understood by the committee that members and directors of housing authorities are not expected to become professional public relations counsellors. Where an authority is serving a community large enough to justify numerous employees assigned to specific functions, the services of a public relations or staff publicity man are usually required, especially during the period between the inception of the authority and the successful operation of houses. In smaller communities authorities will have similar functions but the chairman and executive director may be required to handle personally many of the publicity details (although many such duties may be combined with other functions and handled on a part-time basis by a properly trained staff member). In every case, however, the director, chairman, and members of an authority must understand that the ultimate attitude of the public (laymen, governmental officials, consumer groups, labor organizations, business and commercial interests, professional groups, and others) will be affected to a certain extent by every action and every word of the authority members and staff. It cannot be emphasized too strongly that this is true for authorities and projects, small and large, in every stage of development.

Basic Public Approval to Build on

It is unquestionably true that there is in America an overwhelming public support and approval for public housing. This has been demonstrated in many ways -- by popular approval of federal, state, and local legislation; by polls of public opinion; and by countless group resolutions and endorsements, such as are included in the body of this report. It is also true that opposition exists, but with a great backlog of demonstrable public sympathy, there should be no excuse for failure on the part of a local authority to build an unshakeable foundation of local understanding and support through a far-sighted public relations policy.

Section II - GENERAL GUIDES AND PRINCIPLES

The first rule for sound public relations is that an authority know what it is doing and why. The corollary is simple: tell a clear consistent story through as many mediums and to as many groups as possible. At the formation of a new authority and during a short period of its organization, it is very likely that no one can give a thoroughly organized comprehensive statement. This situation is dealt with more fully in Section V but the following brief points are pertinent here: (1) Do not issue a barrage of publicity just to be saying something; and (2) be prepared to answer questions from reporters, civic organizations, etc., with the questions which confront the authority and the possible solutions which are being considered -- in other words, create a public impression which is a true picture of the state of affairs in order to avoid embarrassing inconsistency later and in order to avoid arousing opposition over a point or a plan which may never be carried through. No amount of skill or industry in publicity or other methods of public relations is an effective substitute for a program that has been thought through carefully and honestly and the parts of which fit together into a consistent whole.

Although forethought and competence are the foundations of successful public relations, it is not necessary nor desirable to try to appear all-wise. Honest suggestions and criticisms should be cordially received. Proven mistakes should be admitted and avoided in the future. It is possible for organizations, economic and social groups, and influential individuals both to respect the foresight and honesty of a local authority as well as to feel some pride from having helped to direct its course of action.

Responsibility in Public Relations

Many local authority members, whose vocation is usually a business or profession, have given little attention to public relations. Although many large-scale private enterprises have serious problems in public relations, most managers of private businesses, particularly smaller ones, feel that their primary responsibility is to their boards of directors or to the stockholders behind them, or to some division or combination of these two groups. Members of local housing authorities, however, are responsible directly to the citizens of their communities, both the taxpayers and those who contribute to the community life in less direct and less tangible ways. In fact, their responsibility is considerably broader, because as investors and spenders of large amounts of federal funds their actions are the proper subjects of interest, attention and scrutiny by citizens of the entire country. They must expect, therefore, more widespread concern with housing policies and methods, more unsolicited advice, more unfriendly and even ignorant criticism than they are accustomed to in their private affairs.

If the full force of these facts can be recognized at the very beginning, local authority members will be spared unnecessary annoyance by what may otherwise seem to be unwarranted probing into their activities and unnecessary concern with the detail of their operations.

This point must be stressed early in this report for several reasons. Many local authority members have had little or no experience in public enterprises of similar scope and importance. Even in public affairs, local housing authorities hold an unusual position. They are independent appointive bodies, insulated in varying degrees from the strife and turmoil of political life, but by the same token, removed somewhat from the chastening effects of securing popular approval at periodic times. Thus, their public relations policy must bear a particularly heavy load in revealing possible sore spots and weaknesses in their programs before major upheaval discredits not only the existing authority, but the entire undertaking. Finally, local authority housing is new in this country and has had a forced growth with relatively slight roots. Public relations must extend those roots or the plant itself withers and dies.

Arm Your Friends and Disarm Your Critics

In prosecuting a sound public relations policy, don't neglect either the authority's friends or its unsympathetic critics. The friends not only deserve full and frank information, but they usually will be able to use it to good advantage with their associates and others. Even the unfailing critics should seldom or never be overlooked. Their effectiveness against the authority's policy will be greatly enhanced if they can truthfully add to their complaints the charge that the public body is dealing only with certain sections of the community and is withholding information from others who have every right to have it.

If, however, too much time is spent on the ardent friends and blind opponents of any progressive housing program, the local authority will be guilty of overlooking one of its most potentially fruitful fields: the great mass of individuals, organizations, groups, and interests, who at present have no strong convictions either for or against public enterprise in housing. Here is where the active supporters are to be recruited and informed, and where the battle for public recognition and acceptance will be won or lost. This large group includes also those who are naturally sympathetic to local authority housing, but who know so little about it that they cannot defend it successfully and who, therefore, may too easily be swung to the other side of the fence by constant repetition of misinformation or specious argument.

Apparent vs. Real Reasons for Opposition

In combating active or latent opposition it is necessary not only to reply to the charges and arguments of housing's detractors, but also to find and deal with the real reasons for their opposition. Sometimes this may be a deep-seated and reasoned intellectual conviction against current trends in public responsibility for economic welfare. More often, however, it will be something else. Economic interests may seem to be, or in fewer cases actually may be, in danger. Personal dislikes for individuals or organizations associated with housing probably play a much larger part than many persons would be inclined to admit. Professional jealousy among technicians and civic leaders is a variant of this. Simple ignorance or misinformation are very common. Emotional prejudices based on slogans and catch words (for example, misapplications of such words as thrift, industry,

family life, etc.) have to be dealt with by patient explanation and facts, but never hardened by sarcasm or unkindness. And finally, many doubters and critics will be suffering from what Walter Bagehot called "one of the greatest pains to human nature -- the pain of a new idea".

If these real, or at least underlying, reasons for opposition can be found, the public relations policy can be much more intelligent than otherwise. Many methods of treatment will depend largely upon common sense and intimate understanding of particular situations. Some practical suggestions will be found in the following Section III.

Soothing rather than Spiting the Aggrieved

In general, it is much wiser to try to allay opposition by stressing compensating benefits to groups who feel themselves harmed or aggrieved, than to fight opposition with counter opposition. For example, instead of blaming slum conditions upon private enterprise and donning the robe of an avenger of the downtrodden, it is better to point out the benefits of a comprehensive housing policy -- primarily, of course, to the slum dwellers, but incidentally to many property-owning interests threatened by the extension of blight and deterioration. In fact, opposition will practically never be overcome or even substantially lessened by any other means. A knockdown and dragout fight will never win over the opposition to housing and, therefore, should be entered into only if it will influence outside groups who would be difficult to reach in any other way. A sound public relations principle is never to start a fight unless a concrete victory can be ascertained and then only if you are certain of winning.

Speak Their Language

Public housing in this country is so young that it is only in the process of developing the background experience and standards of a public enterprise. Members of authorities, as well as those taking some part in the program from outside, look at it as labor leaders, businessmen, welfare workers, politicians, landowners, tenants, architects, or what not, interested in housing rather than as housers. In other words, their opinions, prejudices, and judgments are not primarily those they have acquired in housing, but those they have brought to it from their businesses and professions, modified to some degree by housing study and interest.

These facts are commonplace enough, but some very vital corollaries follow from them. First of all, a local authority's public relations policy must be stated and restated in the languages of these various interested groups. Housing is rapidly developing a terminology and even a jargon of its own, but this should be used very sparingly except among authority staff members, employees of housing associations, and other professional housers. Others should be addressed in language that is familiar to them, even though this may be rather more difficult and in some ways slightly less accurate. Again, some of the friends of public housing have very little in common except their interest in this subject. It is all too easy for them to start fighting among themselves if misunderstandings arise because of a terminology which is not transparently clear. Similarly, unnecessary fights over points that are not worth a public fight can be started between a local

authority and its supporters on one hand and its critics and doubters on the other. Every statement put out by a local authority ought to be examined with these facts in mind. Almost every authority is going to have enough trouble and enough opposition without unwittingly creating animosities and stirring up strife by statements that are not clear to some groups or that touch the most sensitive prejudices of others.

Keeping the House in Order

These facts suggest intra-authority problems that may directly affect public relations. Some authorities have been troubled by lack of understanding among their members. The housing bond has been too recent and is still too weak to overcome the differences of language and the traditional hostilities of groups represented on the authorities. Unless every authority member is as tolerant and patient as possible it becomes simply impossible for a housing program to be formulated and really understood by the authority members themselves. Clearly, if this cannot be done, public relations will be confused and contradictory.

Perhaps even more disturbing has been the disposition of some local authority members actually to resent the efforts of their full-time staff members and others to develop public administration in housing as a profession. These members seem to think that planning, building, and managing low-rent housing might be made into a mildly pleasant form of relaxation in which the "better people" might find recognition and satisfaction. Arguments for courses of action based upon specialized housing experience have been received with open suspicion and even hostility. On the other hand, some authority employees and their friends among professional housers have not been too skillful on their part. They have expected to be given rather than to win confidence. They have been so keen to make progress that they have crowded their ideas upon the authority members more rapidly than they could be taken in and digested.

One of the things American housing experience has conclusively proved is the folly of this sort of mix-up. Providing low-rent housing with public finance and subsidies is not an amiable avocation for well-intentioned persons. Members of local authorities ought to be expected to learn from their housing jobs just as they have learned from their business and professional positions. One of the certain facts is that the success of this kind of housing will depend not only on the wisdom, tolerance, and judgment of local authority members, but on the competence, enthusiasm, and professional attitude of their employees from the executive director down. Recognition of these facts and a sympathetic understanding of each other's part in the housing scheme of things are absolutely basic to any well conceived and vigorously prosecuted program.

Perspective for Housing

An authority should make every effort to see that the major questions of housing policy are discussed as parts of a consistent program for improving housing conditions in the community. Unless this is done, some of the most important questions may be argued out under conditions that are very unfair to the authority. Probably the best example of this is the

policy of partial local subsidy required in the USHA-local authorities program. Tax exemption or reduction (exemption modified by the payment of a service charge) is specifically allowed by the United States Housing Act as a form of local subsidy. For practical reasons, particularly because there is so large a number of taxing units in most urban centers, and because few local governmental agencies have cash available for direct appropriation, tax exemption is the most common and practicable form of local contribution.

If the question of local subsidy, however, is talked solely in terms of tax exemption, a local authority is going to be at a grave disadvantage. In many localities tax exemption has been given to so many types of property that merely mentioning the phrase stirs up a strong resistance in the minds of many people. They don't stop to consider housing needs or whether local subsidy is required in a comprehensive program or any other question of fact or policy: they are against tax exemptions and that is all there is to it. If a local authority allows the argument to be couched in these terms, it will probably fight a losing battle, no matter how energetically it presents its case.

The smart and fair thing to do under these circumstances is to put the question of exemption where it belongs, as simply one means of providing local housing subsidy. The costs of slums and blighted areas should be emphasized. The possible gains from doing away with these conditions should be pointed out. The elements of housing costs should be presented simply and accurately and the need for some form of government subsidy should be made clear. The very liberal subsidy now being paid by the federal government should be explained and the fairness of the requirement that the local community, which after all will gain most directly and immediately from the housing program, should be explicitly stated. With this background two questions of local policy have to be decided: does the local authority's program promise enough benefits to the community to be worth substantial financial contributions to the necessary costs? If not, the authority ought to be dissolved and the time of its members and officers given to other things. There is no magic to subsidized housing. It does cost money and very few people believe that local communities should not bear a share of the costs. If the answer to the question is affirmative, then comes the final decision as to what form the local contribution should take. This is where tax reduction or exemption comes in and not before.

In relating local policies and controversies to the proper setting and background, accurate, up-to-date information on programs in other cities and on federal government activities is essential. The local authority must decide when citing these facts directly will help and when it will hinder progress at home. At all events, the information should be on hand to be used in whatever seems the most effective way. NAHO's news letters and other publications are probably edited more specifically for the use of local authorities than any other sets of housing publications now available.

Considerable material useful for educational or background purposes may be found in articles in well-known magazines of national circulation. The following are a few examples arranged inversely by date of publication:

"Much Ado About Housing", by Rev. Edward Roberts Moore, in the Saturday Evening Post, June 10, 1939.

"The USHA's Influence on Building", by James de G. Graves, in Barron's, April 10, 1939.

"Housing, A National Achievement", by Nathan Straus, in the Atlantic Monthly, February, 1939.

"300 Millions for Housing", by Albert Mayer, in the New York Times Magazine, February 19, 1939.

"The Negro in a Program of Public Housing", by Robert C. Weaver, in Opportunity, July, 1938.

"Their Blood Is Strong", by John Steinbeck, in Shelter, October, 1938.

"Metropolis", Life, May 23, 1938.

"Housing Is Up to You", by Edith Elmer Wood, in Independent Woman, February, 1938.

"American Housing: A Failure, A Problem, A Potential Boon and Boom", Life, November 15, 1937.

"How Europe Is Clearing Its Slums", Look, November 9, 1937.

"The Case Worker's Contribution to Public Housing", by Jean Coman, in The Family, October, 1937.

"Facing the Facts on Housing", Anonymous, in Harpers, March, 1937.

"America Becomes Housing Conscious", by J. Earl Davies, in the Journal of The National Education Association, December, 1935.

"How to Get Good Housing", by Henry S. Churchill, in The New Republic, December 26, 1934.

Guarding against "Political" Brand

The following comment submitted by a member of the Committee has been voiced in substance by a number of other housing officials:

"...a year and a half of service on a local authority impresses me with a necessity of pointing out what is to my mind the greatest single obstacle confronting a housing Authority -- the universal skepticism and distrust which greets a public commission appointed by local politicians for the purpose of spending government funds. Every move made is interpreted as having a political motive; every staff member selected, whatever his reputation before his selection, is looked upon as a favorite son dipping into the pork barrel. This universal suspicion makes it extremely necessary that the board conduct its business in a manner so open and above-board that it will allay suspicion, rather than intensify it. Volumes could be written on the dangers inherent in this whole setup. If there are politicians on the board, such procedure could serve to caution them. If the setup is nonpolitical it could serve at least to keep the board in touch with reality".

Section III - METHODS

Public housing has a very sound justification and plenty of general appeal. The humaneness of its purpose and attractiveness of its results are no excuse, however, for slighting the methods of establishing good public relations. The opponents of housing are going to avail themselves of all of the tested methods of influencing public opinion against it; the least that local authorities and their supporters should do is to be equally as resourceful, aggressive, and persistent.

Basic Approach

Methods of developing and maintaining good public relations require hard constant work. On this subject too many people have been misled by the spectacular tricks of certain publicity agents. They see so much of the flashy devices by which a movie company, say, makes hundreds of thousands of people believe that some blond clotheshorse with a foreign accent is a great emotional actress, that their thoughts on public relations immediately turn to publicity agents and their bags of tricks. They don't expect to use quite the same tricks as the representatives of the movie queens, heavyweight fighters, etc., but they do expect something unusual and more or less spectacular.

Dramatic moves to attract attention and compel interest certainly should not be ruled out. They are not, however, the substance nor body of a public relations program. The everyday personal contacts -- talks, newspaper releases, conferences with special groups, and the other methods of telling the authority's story -- if done consistently, intelligently, and with good humor, are the real basis of the program. If they are well done, the occasional spectacle or dramatic thrust will give point and emphasis. Without them, however, such efforts may turn out to be cheap and hollow gestures.

Closely related to this misconception of methods in public relations is the common underestimate of the amount of time that should be given to them. Some city managers say that they have found it wise to give as much as twenty to thirty per cent of their time to this part of their work. Most of their functions, furthermore, are much better understood and more generally accepted than housing. It is impossible to say what proportion of the time of the executive directors of the various authorities should be given to public relations, but it is important that they and the members of the authorities should expect it to be a sizable proportion. A good job of public relations cannot be sandwiched in when as and if time is found from the more tangible work of an authority.

Make It Human

Although there may be a few exceptions, a very good general rule in public relations methods is to be specific, local, and human. Whatever the medium of communication, talk in concrete terms. Use pictures. Show how the policy or move in question affects typical individuals. Talk about local conditions and needs with just enough generalities and facts from other

cities to make possible comparisons and to give some stimulation and lift. One large metropolitan authority in a city with a generally hostile press has had fine results from stressing the effect of existing projects on children. The papers will run photographs of children playing in the sandboxes and on the swings because they know their readers like pictures of children and will look at them. This confirms the more or less open secret among civic agencies that it is easier to raise money for organizations dealing with children than any other general class of agency. Not only will human interest stories and photographs of children attract attention, but they will influence the general opinion of housing held by many people who will care little about physical standards, housing design, finance or city planning.

Educate the "Official Public"

Although local housing authorities are independent public corporations, they should not neglect nor high-hat the various departments of the regular municipal government or other local governments in the district. They need the active cooperation of such public employees as mayors, directors of public works, city planning officials, recreation directors, building commissioners, public health officers, and members of school boards. They will have to go to city councils for appropriations, for street closings, and for action on other important requests. Other municipal departments and agencies want to know about the plans and activities of housing authorities. Even when their direct help is not needed they can become a powerful influence in determining the attitude of the city hall and considerable sections of the city's population. Many of the relations with them can be handled by the executive director and the authority members on a free, man-to-man basis. Occasional, informal meetings of the authority with these other public officials are well worth their time and trouble. Don't put them off until some urgent request has to be made.

The public relations aspects of cooperation between the housing authority and public welfare and housing inspection officials is dealt with more extensively in Section V -- PROBLEMS OF NEW AUTHORITIES.

The Chairman and the Executive Director

Clearly all the members of an authority will be important in public relations. They will have their connections and will be more or less well known in certain spheres of community life. The two key people, however, in most localities will be the chairman of the authority and its executive director. The chairman as spokesman and chief member of the authority will naturally be called upon for many public appearances and will represent the authority in the minds of many people. The executive director will have to handle much of the day-to-day work in public relations -- meet the newspaper men, prepare and check releases, discover sore spots, provide prompt and intelligent answers to questions, etc. The responsibility of these two officers in public relations ought not to be underestimated in selecting them for these positions. Unless they can handle these duties competently, the authority is going to be handicapped. Some of the work can be delegated but both of these officers will have to do a substantial amount of it themselves. By the very nature of public relations, some of the important jobs cannot be handed on to persons with less imposing titles.

Everyone Counts

In one sense every local authority member and practically every authority employee plays a vital part in public relations. Certainly, the girl at the reception desk in the housing manager's office can make a lot of friends or a lot of enemies for the authority and its program. Casual visitors to a project may talk with janitors or gardeners. The cumulative effect of these contacts even with minor employees can become very considerable. It is most important, therefore, to have an informed, enthusiastic staff, the members of which not only have special abilities, but a fair idea of what the program is about.

It cannot be emphasized too strongly that the everyday contacts of all authority members and employees with, not only reporters, but all groups of people who deal with the authority have a marked effect in molding public relations. For example, the manner in which the switchboard operator answers the telephone and refers calls, the attitude of the person who interviews applicants, the courtesy and cooperation extended to salesmen and representatives of municipal departments and utilities -- each of these contacts can make friends and antagonists. Multiply such contacts a thousandfold in the daily existence of a housing authority (from its first day of operation) and the importance of a carefully considered policy is obvious.

This report cannot go into detail about the methods of public contact training which have been successful in other fields, but the committee strongly recommends that authority members and staff study the "Public Contact Training" report of the American Management Association which is referred to in the bibliography.

Continuity of Program

It is pertinent to point out here that "the first fundamental in the consideration of embarking on a public contact training program must be the acceptance by management of its responsibility for the continuance as well as the inauguration of the program". It is not sufficient to endorse the idea, write a memorandum, hold a pep meeting, and then forget it. The experiences of public utilities, hotels, and department stores which have realized the importance of this aspect of public relations indicate clearly that continued study and persistent emphasis are required by management to prevent friction and irritation in casual public contacts.

Special Groups

Although many of them are obvious, a check list should be made of agencies, organizations, groups, and classes of persons who ought to be accurately informed of the local authority's work. The ways of reaching them will differ and the amount and kind of information to be sent to them will also vary. Complete coverage of the major groups, however, is a prime objective and should not be lost simply through carelessness. Such a list would include the local counterparts of at least the following organizations:

A. Economic Groups

1. Chambers of commerce -- including junior organizations
2. Labor unions (CIO, AFofL); both producers and consumers of housing

3. Manufacturers' associations
4. Banks -- commercial, savings, mortgage lenders
5. Building and loan associations
6. Real estate -- brokers, developers, managers, appraisers, financiers
7. Property owners -- by classes of property, by district or area
8. Material supply companies -- some have provided materials for public housing construction in the past; others have not
9. Architects, engineers, and other professional groups

B. Civic and Welfare Agencies

1. Family relief agencies
2. Councils of social agencies
3. Settlement houses and organizations of them
4. Organizations for the care and protection of children
5. Women's clubs -- by geographical districts, races, nationality, occupations, special purposes
6. Negro organizations
7. Luncheon clubs -- Rotary, Kiwanis, Optimist, Lions, etc. Many have their own magazines
8. Fraternal organizations, including those among foreign language groups
9. Adult education and groups and councils
10. Parent-teacher associations
11. Universities and colleges -- social science faculty, campus clubs, leading individuals
12. Housing associations and committees of other agencies

C. Religious Organizations -- Protestant, Catholic, Jewish. In addition to the churches strictly considered, there are many auxiliary and supplementary organizations of persons of all ages and classes.

D. Racial and Nationality Groups

1. These cut across the other major classifications
2. Some have their own publications, often in other languages than English

E. Political Organizations

1. All parties and their subsidiary organizations
2. Regular or special Council committees on housing or to which housing questions are normally referred. Responsible elective officials deserve credit for genuine assistance and help.
3. "Reform" and "Better Government" organizations
4. Taxpayers' associations -- community organizations of nonpartisan, political nature

F. Public Administrators and Employees

1. Departments directly connected with housing -- building commissioners, public works, planning commissions, zoning boards of appeal, public welfare departments, school boards, park and recreation departments
2. All other departments, bureaus, and ad hoc districts or bodies. Don't overlook county or other local governmental bodies distinct from the regular municipal government

G. Special organizations

1. The American Legion -- some local posts have shown a lively but undeveloped interest in housing

All of these groups should be told the ABC's of the local authority's program as far as possible in the language they best understand. After this initial stage, local circumstances and the reaction of various groups and leading individuals will largely determine the campaign.

Special attention might well be given to housing associations. These private groups, often supported partially by community chest funds, have contacts and interests broader than those of a housing authority. They sometimes perform educational functions that otherwise would be the responsibility of the authority and quite often bear the brunt of the controversies inevitable in the formulation or promulgation of a local authority's program. Some of the best of the educational material illustrated in Appendix B is the product of these citizens' housing groups.

Although the list appears quite formidable, an intelligent program will avoid lumping together and treating alike groups whose natural interests are not the same. This is particularly important in dealing with doubters and outright opponents. For example, in some communities various real estate groups have headed the opposition. Some housing officials are inclined to look upon real estate men as an homogeneous class. As a matter of fact, particularly in the larger cities, they are not. They have certain interests and attitudes in common, but in important respects the real estate subdivider and developer will look at things from a somewhat different angle than the small fellow who ekes out a living from brokerage fees on exchanges in built-up areas. Similarly, the leaders of the more professionalized sections of business, such as the appraisers and property managers, will look at housing differently than the brokers who often are speculators in their own name.

Sharing housing project recreational facilities with neighbors from outside the project is conducive to good public relations, both with these neighborhood families and with the local government. The development of housing projects, especially when located in slum areas, is apt to cause some jealousy among neighbors. The difference in advantages between the project tenants and the neighborhood families may be lessened by the participation of both groups in certain common recreation activities. The tendency of some local governments to look upon public housing developments

as self-sufficient areas divorced from the usual municipal welfare and recreation programs may be offset by the sharing of project facilities with outsiders. In fact such a policy is vital when certain facilities are supplied or maintained at the direct expense of the local government instead of the housing project.

Sources of Conservative Support

In dealing with the naturally unfriendly classes and agencies, some authorities have been very fortunate in finding one or two active supporters in these very groups. It is hard to overestimate the value of such individuals in a public relations program, particularly if they have been successful by the standards of their class. They can talk housing in terms that their fellows understand. They are the best possible refutation of the common attack that housing is the wild dream of some well-intentioned but impractical folks. They know other leaders of independent judgment who should be given particular attention. They can suggest the kind of information and the method of presentation that will be most effective with their groups.

Another device which is not used as often as it deserves is to quote against the fanatic economic groups who oppose housing the more moderate views of their responsible state and national leaders. As everyone knows, in some communities real estate men and less often building and loan organizations have led virulent attacks on public housing. Yet at its annual convention in Pittsburgh on October 19, 1937, the National Association of Real Estate Boards adopted the following resolution on housing:

"RESOLVED that the National Association of Real Estate Boards offer to the Federal Government its aid and cooperation in the improvement of housing conditions for persons of small income; and

"RESOLVED FURTHER that public enterprise should be limited to developments to house those families whose normal income does not enable them to afford the soundly constructed product of private building enterprise, meeting modern minimum standards, currently produced in substantial volume at prevailing wages, in the locality in question; and

"RESOLVED FURTHER that this Association suggest to the Federal Government that through the United States Housing Authority or otherwise that the Federal Government undertake to assist and cooperate with private capital organized in the form of public utility housing companies to function under public supervision in the field of low-cost housing, both with respect to properties erected and operated for rent and properties developed and built for sale."

In their 1938 convention, the National Association of Real Estate Boards showed a continued, though more critical, interest in the public housing program, passing resolutions as follows:

"that housing projects built by the USHA be confined to slum or blighted areas and provide minimum facilities necessary for health, safety, and public morals instead of more elaborate accommodations;

"that housing projects financed by government pay their regular taxes even though some agency of government must make specific appropriations for this purpose;

"that the 1940 decennial census undertake to gather data on housing, taxation, and other matters of interest to the real estate and construction business;

"that the Association study the problem of blighted areas and seek to evolve plans for city rebuilding by private initiative with governmental cooperation." *

Similarly a committee of the United States Building and Loan League prepared a report on the Wagner-Steagall bill before it became the United States Housing Act of 1937. Although critical of certain sections of the bill as introduced (some of which were amended in Congress), the report stated a reasonable general attitude toward public enterprise in housing:

"Many will debate the question of public responsibility for the provision of new dwelling accommodations for any class of our American citizens. This discussion cannot be ended by logic or declamation. The fact remains that groups representing large numbers of American citizens have become interested in public housing and are convinced that it is an appropriate and necessary part of our government activities. Labor unions, headed by the powerful American Federation of Labor, religious groups, civic and municipal bodies have taken vigorous and public positions on behalf of public housing and have placed before the Federal legislative bodies innumerable petitions, resolutions and communications evidencing support. When labor, civic and social groups, including also some business groups, urge public housing, it becomes a reality which must be dealt with thoughtfully and carefully....

"There must be a better understanding of the responsibilities and possibilities of the various governmental units, if our experiments with public housing are to succeed. It is the judgment of this Committee that the initiation, development and control of all public housing should be a matter for local government and not for the state or Federal governments. The role of Federal and state governments should be that of leadership and planning, with possibly very modest assistance in financing. Local bodies, supported by local public opinion, should initiate projects and share the expense. They should further be required to adopt and enforce reasonable ordinances preventing overcrowding, prohibiting the renting of insanitary housing and providing for the demolition of unsafe or insanitary structures."

Similar quotations from other public leaders will come to hand from time to time. They should be actively looked for in the proceedings of state and national conventions, in transcripts of public hearings on housing measures, in symposiums in such publications as the Annals of the American Academy. Many of these will be listed in NAHO NEWS. Whenever or wherever found they should be carefully noted or clipped and filed for future use. It is too

*Although the 1940 N.A.R.E.P. resolution opposed any further direct public construction or operation of housing a number of local real estate boards and members of such boards are entirely favorable to the program.

much to hope that they will always turn up just when the chairman of the local authority is scheduled to make a speech to the local chamber of commerce.

Another and growing source of support for local authority housing is the decisions of state supreme courts passing upon the validity of housing enabling acts. Needless to say, these courts are ultra-respectable in the eyes of many conservative groups. To date favorable decisions on housing, with many quotable sections, have been handed down by high courts in New York, Kentucky, Pennsylvania, Louisiana, North Carolina, Florida, Montana, West Virginia, South Carolina, Illinois, Georgia, Tennessee, Indiana, and Alabama.

Such opinions usually will help in dealing with generalized attacks on public housing. As to the reasonableness of particular programs, the feasibility of projects, local need, prospective rentals, and similar problems, the local authority must of course rely upon its own facts and the reasonableness of the conclusions drawn from them. Even when the general attacks are not made openly, the opinions of public leaders may often be used as effective introductory material to a discussion of the local program. They will help to allay suspicions and lessen certain emotional distrusts in public enterprise that are very common among business groups. Such an introduction will also show that the local authority is not entirely oblivious to the issues and personalities of current interest to the business groups. It certainly is better to approach a meeting of real estate men with a relatively mild statement from one of their national leaders than with a bristling opinion from some prominent social worker.

Publicity Mediums

As has been stated before in this report, the Committee wishes to emphasize the fact that a public relations policy embraces much more than publicity methods and devices. On the other hand, publicity is a major tool in public relations and on no account should be slighted. At the outset it is well to prepare another check list of mediums of communication. To this should be added, if possible, an estimate of the number of classes of people reached by each and the relative influence of each on the opinions of these groups about public issues. Such a list would include the following methods of communication, with the local details necessary for their most effective use:

1. Pamphlets, leaflets, and handbills. In the early stages of an authority and when specific problems involving special groups are encountered, printed material may be used to advantage. Occasionally, such material is available from outside sources, such as reports of State Housing Boards, NAHO bulletins, etc. Avoid indiscriminate flooding of the community with outside material, however, as it may spoil the interest you may want from time to time in special publications of your own. One useful method of making such publications is reprinting news stories or magazine articles when suitable. Illustrations are useful, format should be attractive, but avoid the chance of criticism for wasteful spending and distributing. (See also Section VI -- FORM AND USE OF REPORTS.)

2. Newspapers of general circulation.
3. Special sections or editions of "2" for special geographical areas, both within the city proper and outside. The distinction between "2" and "3" has been found to be very important in some metropolitan cities in which the leading papers are generally opposed to public housing because they look upon it as an offspring of the New Deal. In many of these papers it has been impossible to secure a consistently fair, let alone a friendly, treatment of the doings of the local authority. The special sections, however, (most common in Saturday and Sunday editions) have sometimes given a very considerable amount of space to housing projects planned for their districts. These sections compete with the local sheets and often are for specific projects of obvious advantage to the neighborhood or local area.
4. "Shopping News" and other advertising mediums ordinarily distributed free. The amount, kind, and quality of news varies considerably from one to another.
5. Neighborhood or district papers.
6. Foreign and other specialized papers.
7. Magazines, news letters, special publications of civic, fraternal, business, labor, and other groups already mentioned.
8. Periodicals of sectional or national circulation. It is not easy to make these with stories of essentially local interest. It can be done, however, if a local program is particularly well organized and in important respects may be taken as typical of what can be done elsewhere. Reprints of such articles in local magazines or distributed through local organizations would bring local pride to play on the side of the housing program.
9. Radio -- particularly local stations specializing in matters of local interest. Over a period of time try to get on the air at different times of the day so that you will not be speaking always to housewives alone nor competing with the heavily advertised shows of the big networks. Straight speeches, except by very prominent persons, are probably listened to very little. Dialogues, interviews, including those with tenants of new projects, slum dwellers, etc., round-table discussions, and other devices developed more recently should be used as much as possible. USHA has prepared and will supply to local groups a set of thirteen fifteen-minute electrically transcribed programs entitled "Slums Cost You Money". These can be related to the local housing program by the use of proper introductory remarks.
10. Talks before committees, associations, neighborhood groups, etc. In many ways these are the most difficult and tiring, but at the same time one of the most effective means of telling about housing. Wherever possible questions and discussion from the floor should be permitted, in fact, encouraged. They not only will increase the

effectiveness of the speech but also will indicate points of doubt and misunderstanding to be dealt with in future discussions with similar groups.

11. Public libraries. It should be relatively easy to persuade the local librarian to acquire and keep readily available current publications of the local authority itself, state and federal housing agencies, NAHO, the local housing association, commercial publications, and other sources of current facts and opinion.
12. Libraries and reading rooms of all organizations listed above.
13. Plays and movies. The resources available for these will vary enormously from city to city. USHA's Division of Research and Information may prepare films for distribution among local authorities. Sometimes amateur films and slides not good enough to stand by themselves will make interesting additions to public lectures and discussions. In the smaller cities beware of illustrations exclusively on conditions and programs in the largest metropolitan centers.
14. Exhibits. Charts, graphs, models, maps, pictorial statistics, and similar devices are most effective, particularly if they can be presented in a reasonably accessible place. Housing and other local agencies, colleges, schools, state, and national housing bodies, can contribute to such displays. Again USHA plans materials that can be sent about the country. A common error in housing exhibits is to make them too complex -- too many statistics, too elaborate graphs, too "advanced" forms of presentation. Remember the purpose is to convey housing information and not to provide creative release for bright young architects or designers.
15. Public hearings. Although hearings have their dangers, they are a much neglected form of establishing sound public relations. They have been used effectively by some agencies, particularly in the early stages of their programs. They do require certain basic facts in the hands and minds of the local authority and a patient and skillful presiding officer. They should not be held without due notice, so that groups favorable to the general program, as well as those opposed to it and the inevitable cranks and crackpots, will be on hand to have their say.
16. Private hearings or meetings to which representatives of particularly interested or potentially helpful organizations or bodies should be invited. The chief danger is that groups not invited might take it as an affront or as favoritism. This possibility can be minimized somewhat by confining the discussions to particular subjects or phases of the program and providing for public hearings or some other means for other groups to submit their ideas.
17. Demonstration units. In all projects, whether new construction or rehabilitation, typical units should be available for inspection by all interested persons. If the demand is heavy, this may mean keeping one unit in each project unoccupied. Under other circumstances

various tenant families will be not only willing but anxious to show their quarters to visitors, particularly if they can be given some advance notice. The management staff should have adequate facilities for conducting visitors through the projects. Those in charge of such trips should have sufficient intelligence and position in the organization to make a good impression upon even the more critical visitors, to answer at least ninety per cent of the questions and otherwise to make the visitors, be they high or low, feel that they have been well treated and know what is going on. Unless a citizens' housing association is prepared to conduct trips through the slums and blighted areas, the local authority might well combine a limited amount of these visits with the inspection of its own properties.

18. Annual and other reports by the local authority. These are listed last, but are by no means least in importance. They are discussed at length in a separate section of this report. (See Section VI.)

As in so many other phases of public relations the most effective means of employing these various methods of publicity and communication will depend to a very large degree upon local circumstances. In some cities the general press will be friendly; in others, bitterly hostile. Similar variations will be found in the attitudes of those who control the other methods of communication.

Two rules, of almost universal application, however, should be noted. First, the local authority's executive director (and director of public relations, if there is one) should meet and be on as friendly personal relations as possible with those who manage the various channels of publicity. As often as possible this personal acquaintance should include also members of the local authorities, owners, and boards of directors of publications and organizations.

Test the Results

The other rule is that the local authority and its staff should constantly be trying to test the effectiveness of various publicity methods and campaigns. In commercial advertising of all kinds the corresponding problem is given constant study. Straw votes and the various polls of public opinion, although based on very simple statistical techniques, have been developed and tested on a very large scale in recent years. In the larger cities, some light on the local authorities' campaigns might be gathered from discussions with circulation managers of papers, advertising agencies, local specialists in conducting straw votes, and others with similar experience and background.

Regardless of the outcome of such conversations with outsiders, the authority itself should be able to get some light on the effectiveness of its publicity methods. A simple but reasonably systematic record should be kept of all contacts with the various major groups and classes of the population. The method of contact and the subject matter of the discussions or publicity should be noted. Reports from particularly friendly or interested individuals in the various groups on progress or reverses in attitude will be useful. More or less spontaneous evidences of interest will be another index. A

various tenant families will be not only willing but anxious to show their quarters to visitors, particularly if they can be given some advance notice. The management staff should have adequate facilities for conducting visitors through the projects. Those in charge of such trips should have sufficient intelligence and position in the organization to make a good impression upon even the more critical visitors, to answer at least ninety per cent of the questions and otherwise to make the visitors, be they high or low, feel that they have been well treated and know what is going on. Unless a citizens' housing association is prepared to conduct trips through the slums and blighted areas, the local authority might well combine a limited amount of these visits with the inspection of its own properties.

18. Annual and other reports by the local authority. These are listed last, but are by no means least in importance. They are discussed at length in a separate section of this report. (See Section VI.)

As in so many other phases of public relations the most effective means of employing these various methods of publicity and communication will depend to a very large degree upon local circumstances. In some cities the general press will be friendly; in others, bitterly hostile. Similar variations will be found in the attitudes of those who control the other methods of communication.

Two rules, of almost universal application, however, should be noted. First, the local authority's executive director (and director of public relations, if there is one) should meet and be on as friendly personal relations as possible with those who manage the various channels of publicity. As often as possible this personal acquaintance should include also members of the local authorities, owners, and boards of directors of publications and organizations.

Test the Results

The other rule is that the local authority and its staff should constantly be trying to test the effectiveness of various publicity methods and campaigns. In commercial advertising of all kinds the corresponding problem is given constant study. Straw votes and the various polls of public opinion, although based on very simple statistical techniques, have been developed and tested on a very large scale in recent years. In the larger cities, some light on the local authorities' campaigns might be gathered from discussions with circulation managers of papers, advertising agencies, local specialists in conducting straw votes, and others with similar experience and background.

Regardless of the outcome of such conversations with outsiders, the authority itself should be able to get some light on the effectiveness of its publicity methods. A simple but reasonably systematic record should be kept of all contacts with the various major groups and classes of the population. The method of contact and the subject matter of the discussions or publicity should be noted. Reports from particularly friendly or interested individuals in the various groups on progress or reverses in attitude will be useful. More or less spontaneous evidences of interest will be another index. A

reasonably experienced and sensitive speaker will have a fair idea of the reception given to his ideas, particularly if he appears before similar groups over a period of several months.

Occasionally a direct check will be possible. For example, one authority undertaking tenant selection for federal projects was faced with a general misunderstanding of nearly all aspects of the projects. It undertook a vigorous counterattack with newspaper stories and pictures, the distribution of simple, two-color leaflets about rents and eligibility standards through settlement houses, churches, clinics, neighborhood associations, and other organizations; radio talks; and other means of publicity listed above. After a short time the response shown in the applications was very encouraging. It would have been easy and natural to let the matter go at that. The authority, however, saw a chance to check on the effectiveness of various publicity methods on families of the lower income groups and asked each applicant how he heard about the project and why he decided to apply. These simple inquiries gave several thousand direct and probably very reliable replies. Even in a very large city this would be an excellent sample. It did not, of course, indicate the negative reactions, but it was a relatively simple study very well worth making. Incidentally, a large proportion of those who applied subsequent to the publicity campaign had read the relatively few stories that appeared in the newspapers of general circulation. The next largest class were those who were told about the development by friends who had previously applied.

Reporters Are Human

The day-to-day contacts with the press raise some very nice questions. The best single recommendation on press relations is that the local authority's representative should always be available, should be fair and honest with reporters and should not be too captious against the occasional minor criticisms that are bound to appear in even relatively friendly papers. The authority's officers should make a constant and honest attempt to understand the requirements and problems of the local newspaper and of the reporters themselves. Under most circumstances it is well for press releases to go out through one man, preferably the executive director, or in an authority with a very large staff, sometimes through a director of public relations. Authorities that employ an administrative assistant to the executive director should consider the possibility of using such a staff member rather than a full-time director of public relations.¹ The executive director or his designated subordinate will then become the natural source of information for the reporters and will be in a better position than the individual members of the authority to answer questions fairly, to know when background material can safely be given out, to explain reasons for temporary secrecy (for example, in land acquisition), and in general to present all the information that can be given out. Thus he will have a fine chance to earn the trust and respect of the reporters assigned to the authority.

¹This subject of staff organization is dealt with more fully in "Local Housing Authority Administration", NAHO, July, 1939. Approximately 160pp. \$2.50.

On some matters, of course, the authority's members will wish to make statements on their own, either to explain their individual positions or for other reasons. This is unavoidable and if an honest attempt is made to conduct as little of the authority's business as possible in the newspapers, no great harm will come of it.

Editors of papers (particularly those sympathetic to public housing) may be willing to give the housing authority an opportunity to see adverse "letters to the editor" before publication and prepare replies thereto for publication at the same time or immediately thereafter.

Centralizing Information

It is futile and suspicion-arousing to try to bottle up all information about the authority or to make all of it flow through one and only one channel. Resident housing managers ought to be able to answer practically all questions of fact about their developments. Questions of policy or of controversial fact or interpretation should be referred to the executive director. Under many circumstances the discretion of the managers can be trusted in making these distinctions. On very important issues written instructions from the director's office should go out, if possible, before the papers are on the trail. Minor slip-ups and contradictions, although they are embarrassing and ought to be avoided as far as possible, are less dangerous in the long run than the public reaction to a policy that makes all employees of a public agency wooden puppets apparently without facts, opinion, or responsibility and only able to refer questioners to some fount of knowledge and wisdom in the central office.

If a contact man is set up, a large number of inquiries will go to him as a matter of course and convenience. Miscellaneous questions or attempts to check on minor matters can safely be answered by technical directors, housing managers, or other staff members. If the contact man is the executive director, his relations with his subordinates should be such that no serious discrepancies would appear. On very controversial or important issues he can give specific instructions, including, if necessary, that all inquiries on the question at issue be sent to him. His policy on all major issues, of course, would be subject to the instructions of the authority and between meetings to discussions with the chairman.

Services to Others

As a local authority advances its program it should collect many statistical and other facts of value to real estate developers, mortgage lenders, and such public officials as tax assessors, planning engineers, and school officers. In fact, if the local authority has to make surveys itself, it should consider the feasibility of adding certain questions to survey schedules that would produce results of interest to these other housing and public improvement agencies, which regardless of their current attitude toward the local authority are, in fact, partners in housing enterprise and city building. In whatever manner these facts come into the authority's possession, they might well be tabulated and made available directly to interested agencies.

A move of this sort will help to dispel the impression that the local authority is out to harm legitimate, private enterprise in housing and is interested in other public undertakings only to the extent that it can get tax exemption, street closings, or some other form of assistance. Furthermore, if the authority will contribute some information to these other agencies, it will be in a much stronger position to go to them for facts and opinions that it will need from time to time. Finally, this procedure will inevitably bring a clear understanding of how the different forms of enterprise can be made to fit together into a comprehensive program.

One local authority has developed an interesting variant of this procedure. In opening up a federal project it had to reject literally thousands of applications because the family incomes were too high. These rejected families clearly were a potential market for some form of housing enterprise, probably large-scale investment housing. The families in question were definitely interested in improving their living conditions. The authority had enough information about their residence, place of work, etc., so that an interested cooperative or private developer would have many useful leads in determining whether it could supply their needs and if so, how, when, and where. This local authority is now compiling this information prior to making it available to other housing agencies. Names and specific addresses, of course, will not be given out, but the basic facts properly classified will be very useful. Again, this is good housing policy and good public relations.

Approach Housing Consumers

A local authority naturally will have a lot to do with many individuals and agencies who are concerned with the production, ownership, and maintenance of housing. These include property owners, labor unions, supply people, bankers, and real estate men. It should not forget, however, that there are large sections of the population whose primary, if not sole, interest is as consumers of housing. These include not only the slum dwellers proper, but thousands of families, particularly in the larger cities, who are living in areas more or less blighted and more or less inadequate as homes in which to bring up families. Labor unions occupy a particularly crucial position in housing matters because they are both producer and consumer groups. They are not, however, the sole avenue to housing consumers. Neighborhood associations, PTA's, and others of the agencies and organizations listed above should be looked upon primarily in this role.

The housing background of consumer groups may seem at first to be somewhat limited, but they will have some very highly developed and practical ideas. Thus, they will be useful to the authority, not only as an army of potential supporters, but as a good realistic check on the fancy ideas of planners, architects, and others having to do with housing production. Although some critics may become particularly infuriated with a public relations policy directed to these groups, their wrath probably will be a good index of the effectiveness of such a campaign. Within broad limits it certainly is a good democratic principle that the squeaky wheel gets the grease. A public agency that avails itself of a consumer interest, support, and criticism is following a perfectly sound and American policy.

The tenants in a housing authority's projects are of course a special group of consumers. They can be an invaluable asset in public relations if a friendly and understanding attitude has been developed. Progressive management policies and practices are essential in developing this attitude. In many cases outside criticisms of project operation can be answered effectively by tenants themselves. An interesting example of such voluntary support of a housing authority is found in the following letter from a tenant of a midwestern public housing project to the executive officer of the housing authority:

Through newspaper articles, printed circulars, pressure from the local area club and more or less gentle "reminders" from individuals directly interested, my attention has been called to letters sent out by your office to certain tenants relative to their income and requesting them to seek living quarters elsewhere and to relinquish their apartments in the federal housing projects.

Although the pressures exerted by the above mentioned efforts have been designed to the contrary, and further, there have been none opposing them to my knowledge--acting independently and with spontaneity I fully endorse the position which you have chosen concerning this matter.

Unless and until lower income groups are adequately housed, those not in the lowest income groups should abide with a rule of helping those first who need help most. I believe the general public supports your contention, as the criticisms I have most often heard expressed are that we (the tenants) have "high incomes and swell cars". If they are mistaken in their opinion of our rights to the benefits of federal housing those in responsible position must strive none the less to allay suspicion and to gain the confidence of the citizenry whose approval must be had if further expansion is contemplated.

Advisory Committees

Advisory committees seem a natural device in conjunction with any complex new public undertaking. When the undertaking is in the hands of an agency somewhat removed from direct popular control, the suggestions for advisory committees are bound to come early and often. Under these circumstances and despite the difficulties and dangers, these committees often will be found desirable and useful to local authorities. Here again local authority members might remind themselves that they are directing a public enterprise and, therefore, must expect and in fact welcome a degree of outside interest and probing that they might resent in their private business or professional careers.

Past Experience. It is true that some advisory committees in housing have turned out badly. These unfortunate results have been quite widely publicized and some local authorities start with a definite prejudice against the device. On the other hand, some of the older local authorities have handled advisory committees very well indeed and consequently have secured very favorable results. The last report of the Syracuse Housing Authority outlines a very elaborate system of advisory committees that were used in formulating the local Authority's initial program and in

interpreting it to the various sections of the community. The New York City Authority worked closely with an advisory committee in its initial tenant selection. Both the advice and the public effect of the Authority's obvious desire to play all the cards above the table helped the program measurably. The Covington, (Kentucky) authority has set up advisory committees that are in fact joint committees of the authority and outside groups, the chairman of each committee automatically meeting with the authority. The Authority's legal counsel sits in on many of the meetings to advise what can and cannot be done under the enabling act and other statutes and ordinances that effect the authority's work. An advisory committee to the Chicago Authority on tenant selection did a very good job under great pressure and trying circumstances.

Guides in Their Use. This is by no means a complete list of the authorities that have used advisory committees to advantage, but it indicates that the a priori prejudice against them in some quarters is ill founded. Experience so far with advisory committees has revealed some fairly specific rules that local authorities should keep in mind.

First, the more specific the committee's scope and powers -- what the English call the "terms of reference" -- the better are its chances for success. Vague, ill-defined statements at the beginning can easily make for misunderstanding. The committee's members may interpret them broadly, the authority members narrowly. Later attempts to clarify or to restate them after some issue has been raised will naturally be looked upon with suspicion by one or both parties.

Closely related is the recommendation that under most circumstances an advisory committee's duties should be limited at the outset to a definite period of time. Even if this period is later extended, setting it at the beginning is a good move. It indicates to the committee members that they are expected to make a real contribution while their advice is needed. It removes the very awkward situation so often arising when the advisor and the advisee are at outs and neither one knows just how to wind up the relationship. If the advisory committee resigns, this move may be subject to all kinds of unfriendly interpretations. If it stays on, questions constantly arise that embarrass both it and the authority.

At the beginning it is essential that the members of the advisory committee be made to understand that their function is to advise. Too often the person organizing the committee, in order to induce some particularly prominent or capable individuals to serve, makes rash promises as to the scope and responsibility to be given to the committee. Later these unwise promises and hints come back to plague the authority. These troubles could be avoided to some extent by frankly telling the committee members while they are being recruited that the authority faces a definite responsibility for all decisions and policies affecting its work. It wants advice; it will give most careful consideration to the recommendations of its committee; but under the responsibility its members have assumed, it cannot delegate decisions or administrative authority to an outside group, however capable and interested its members may be. A frank statement of this sort at the beginning ought to minimize later troubles, as well as secure a degree of respect for the authority members and their attitude toward their job.

Perhaps most important of all factors in the success of an advisory committee is the man who customarily represents the authority in dealing with them. Ordinarily it would be the executive director or, if the committee were on management or technical aspects, the person in charge of this branch of the authority's work. Under all circumstances he should be of sufficient rank in the authority's affairs so that committee members feel that they are dealing with a man with real responsibility. He should also be a big enough man to bring the committee's recommendations to the authority even when they are opposed to his own views. He should arrange meetings occasionally between the chairman and members of the authority with the committee or with its officers. In all of his contacts he should show ability to get along with people, both when he agrees with them and when he doesn't. Most of the failures of advisory committees in housing can be traced to weaknesses in the position or personal qualifications of this contact man. Too often he has had practically no experience of this kind. His manner and approach has been suspicious or formal and wooden in the extreme. When this has been combined with inability to make decisions himself on any points without reference to outside agencies, the results have usually been about what would be expected.

Finally, as in so many other phases of human relations, it is most important to get the jump on the difficulties. The authority and its representatives ought to anticipate the major issues and the possible differences of opinion with the advisory committee. If the committee's advice is not followed, it deserves a full and friendly explanation. Waiting until some disaffection shows itself is a fatal mistake. Once an advisory committee suspects that it is being used solely for window dressing or that its advice is sought only as a matter of course, it is very, very difficult to change their opinion.

Size. Particularly in the bigger cities, the formation of advisory committees often runs into awkward questions as to what agencies should or should not be represented and various jurisdictional disputes between different groups and organizations. The obvious danger is that if some are not represented, they might be offended and their attitude toward all housing work in the city be affected. On the other hand, if all groups and agencies are represented, the committee becomes not a real advisor but merely a long list of names. Attempts to meet these two difficulties by forming a large committee and then selecting an executive committee or group from among its number haven't worked very well. An executive committee is all right when it can live up to its name; that is, put into execution a program or policy determined upon by a larger body. It doesn't seem to work when the only business of the larger group is to offer advice and criticism. The relation between the authority and the subordinate members of the advisory committee becomes altogether too attenuated when the committee members have to advise an executive group that in turn advises with the authority members or their executive director.

Two devices, however, have proved of some value. In some cities it has been possible to select as committee members persons who can properly represent, or at least be acceptable to, more than one agency or group. If enough individuals of this sort can be found, the committee can be kept to a workable number. Other authorities have set up not one general advisory group

but a number of specialized committees: one on tenant selection, one on community activities, one on rehabilitation, one on physical standards, etc. No one committee is large but they are selected so that most of the major interested groups are represented on one or another. This has the further advantage of allowing many of the outside agencies to be connected with advisory groups that deal with their particular interests or housing hobbies. On the other hand, it adds materially to the time that must be given to advisory committee work and thus imposes a particularly heavy strain on the executive director or other contact man for the authority. It will be more generally useful when more authorities have adequate staffs. The executive directors will then be able to delegate some of the work with advisory committees to the appropriate division heads.

The possibility of using an established citizens' housing association as an advisory group should not be overlooked. Such associations, if well run, will already have recruited able citizens representing important civic groups and will have on hand much of the information upon which to base decisions requested by the authority.

Correspondence and Telephone

Aside from periods of land acquisition, tenant relocation, and initial tenant selection, most of an authority's contacts will be by correspondence or telephone. Careful original wording and occasional review of form letters, forms, and original correspondence by the staff member in charge of public relations will be very worth while. Because of its public nature, the authority must accord courteous attention to all of its correspondents but at the same time must not allow promises or statements contrary to major policy to be made.¹

The importance of telephone etiquette has already been mentioned under the heading "Everyone Counts" in this Section. Very helpful suggestions and sometimes a small amount of actual training of staff charged with handling most phone calls can be obtained from representatives of the telephone companies. They have spent years studying this special subject of cultivating good public relations.

Basic Information in the Schools

For a long-range program an authority should see that the basic facts about housing and the physical development of cities are realistically treated in the public schools. Controversies over procedure and local policy have no place there, but the underlying facts and principles are proper subjects for the information and further study of the citizens-to-be. Most authorities will probably find that stating their program in reasonably simple terms for school use will open up an even wider audience for such material. In the earlier days of the Chicago Plan, an attractive illustrated textbook called "Wacker's Manual on the Plan of Chicago" was used in the public schools as a textbook. In the light of city planning practice of the

¹Readers are referred to "Writing Effective Government Letters", by James F. Grady and Milton Hall. School of Public Affairs, American University, Washington, D. C., 1938. 59pp. mimeo.

day, it was a commendable step in civic education and without doubt added greatly to the support and prestige given to the Chicago Plan for many years. Starts in this direction in housing have been made in the "Housing ABC's" written by Arthur Bohmen for the Metropolitan Housing Council of Chicago and similar organizational material on planning put out by the Regional Plan of New York and elsewhere.

At the start of this long-term move one of the first steps should be with local colleges, normal schools, associations of teachers, PTA's, etc. Work with these groups also will be found worth while for their immediate influence upon public support for present programs.

One local housing authority is using an historical essay contest in the secondary schools to derive names for its projects. The contest will be judged by a committee composed of library and museum heads and local educators.

Public Relations Director

Some of the better financed authorities in large cities undoubtedly will employ a part- or full-time public relations man. Some of these may be ex-newspaper men or employees of public relations organizations of one kind or another. Others may be assigned by public relations offices engaged by the authority. It is too soon to say under what circumstances one or the other of these arrangements will be most successful. Smaller authorities may find the assignment of public relations' functions to an administrative assistant to the executive director an effective solution.

It should be emphasized here, however, that useful as this specialized service may be to a large and active authority, a public relations director or counsel should work directly under the supervision and authority of the executive director. Unless this is clearly understood from the beginning, it will be very easy to lose the vital integration of policy and public relations. Looked at from another angle, the executive director should not expect to rid himself of responsibility for public relations by the employment of a specialist in these matters. He could make no worse mistake than to feel that with such a man on the staff, he, the executive director, can go ahead and do things and leave the chore of telling the public about them to the public relations man. Such an attitude is contrary to what the Committee has tried to state above as the essential nature of any effective public relations policy.

Section IV - PROBLEMS OF ESTABLISHED AGENCIES

By and large the older local authorities are in cities in which the FWA Housing Division built one or more large-scale developments. A few are in localities once on FWA's active list, but in which for one reason or another the projects did not materialize. One set of problems of established agencies, therefore, grows from the character of the FWA program and the results it produced.

FWA's Housing

The Housing Division carried on an emergency program. It proceeded under highly general language in Congressional acts and with very little general understanding or support. In fact during the early stages even the so-called "experts" were often at a loss in dealing with some of the practical problems as they arose. In addition, the Division was continually rushing to meet some dead line for the use of make-work funds. Under these circumstances, the wonder is not that mistakes were made but that housing projects were actually built at all. The other well-known characteristic of FWA housing was that it was a federal enterprise with one hundred per cent federal financing.

From these facts arise two or three misconceptions about public housing enterprise that ought to be attacked vigorously wherever they appear. The first is the impression that FWA housing was extravagantly expensive. The second is that public housing in all communities will necessarily follow the physical types of design and construction used by the FWA. More specifically public housing is often said or implied to be "mass housing" or apartment house building. Finally, the previous method of finance has made some communities believe that all public housing is a gift from Washington, requiring locally only good intentions and some sort of advisory committee. Too often the local authority's duties are confused with those of the previous advisory groups. It is really laughable how indignant some prominent citizens, including municipal officials, can become at the suggestion that the locality ought to meet some of the costs of a public housing program. They would seem to expect the federal government to provide practically all the capital, all of the annual subsidies and in addition, to make gifts, directly or indirectly, to meet the running expenses of the local authority. This attitude does not exist in all cities, of course, but it is fairly common. Strangely enough, some of the local officials who have this view of things are quickest to see overcentralization and dictation in every regulation from Washington.

Housing Costs and Benefits

As to the costs of the federal projects, the facts ought to be determined and discussed with all interested and competent groups. Undoubtedly some of them are on the high side. Under the circumstances, however, the showing is not at all bad. In fact it is infinitely better than a lot of exaggerated stories and common innuendo have led many people to believe. The official story of the FWA, Straus and Wegg's "Housing Comes of Age", is

worth reading for the background of FWA procedure and problems. Written by two former employees of the FWA, the book naturally presents that agency's side of the controversial questions. The Bureau of Labor Statistics is completing an analysis and study of FWA housing costs. Reports have appeared so far in the Monthly Labor Review for January, 1938. The Architectural Forum for May, 1938 also had much useful material on FWA developments. In handling these figures some attention should be given to the points on housing costs mentioned below.

As to types of housing to be built, it should be clearly and repeatedly stated that neither the United States Housing Act nor the rulings of USHA require any one or two types of construction. As a matter of fact, in nearly all of the projects approved so far the prevailing type has been the two-story group house. (Contrary to a general impression the FWA Housing Division's projects were not by any means exclusively apartment houses.)

Undoubtedly in public education in housing it is wise to start by emphasizing the benefits to the poorly housed, to property owners, and to the community generally, rather than the costs of an effective housing program. It is also true that some housing enthusiasts have made trouble for themselves by not squarely facing the questions of costs and who is to pay them. Preferably before a local housing authority is established (but if not then, shortly thereafter), these questions should be frankly stated and openly discussed. They are bound to come out sooner or later and the housers have everything to gain from introducing them to public discussion. There is no hocus pocus about the costs of subsidies and the appropriations necessary for proper functioning of public housing agencies. The real question is whether the benefits justify the outlays. The chances of a favorable answer are much better if the questions of costs are broached while appreciation of the benefits is keenest.

A warning may be in order here on the argument for public housing based on specific and general benefits to the community at large. This is a perfectly valid and sound argument but sometimes it has been overworked. The kickback from extravagant claims will more than offset any temporary advantage from them. Of course, arguments for public consumption cannot be hedged about too carefully and whenever possible should be concrete and dramatic. Little is gained, however, by making any section of the community believe that two or three large-scale housing projects will solve all taxation problems and reduce expenditures for crime, juvenile delinquency, tuberculosis, etc., to the vanishing point. Results of this kind will take time and will require other improvements in addition to low-rent housing. (See NAHO Bulletin No. 99 on municipal revenues and expenditures as related to housing.)

After they are well established, most local housing authorities go through a stage at which most of their inquiries and public discussion have to do with the costs of building, operating, and maintaining housing. Unfortunately some of them have been fooled by the apparent simplicity of this subject. Although very little thought is needed to realize that construction costs are only one of an important series, in too many localities ninety-five per cent of the interest has been focussed on this phase of the subject. This is unfortunate for two reasons. In all urban housing the

costs of operation and maintenance are important. Particularly under the USHA method of subsidy, they practically determine the rent level. Furthermore, unless the full scope of housing costs is understood not only by the local authority but as far as possible by the interested citizens, public opinion is unduly swayed, often against the authority, by claims that private individuals or other agencies are building more economically than the local authorities. Sometimes it is claimed that the other construction is so much more economical that no subsidy whatever is needed.

Invariably when these extreme claims are looked into, it is found that decent standards or future maintenance costs have been sacrificed to low original construction cost or that a very few units have been built under unusual labor or material price conditions that could not be repeated on any large scale.

No local authority will expect to make all the citizens of its community experts in housing costs. It is not unreasonable to try to make a large proportion of them understand the ABC's of costs, particularly what is paid for by the tenants of the local authority's projects. Then when partial and misleading comparisons are made, the authority can point out inadequacies with some hope of general understanding. This result cannot be achieved over night but it is worth a slow and patient program of education. Some help at the start may be found in an outline on housing costs originally presented in NAHO Bulletin No. 106. This was not written for the general reader but does point out the major kinds of costs and the distinctions that have to be made in judging the comparisons usually made.

Old Public Relations

Unfortunately it is true that in some communities the FWA Housing Division handled its public relations badly. Again it must be admitted that the problem was not an easy one. The FWA was supposed to put men to work. Often it had to try to rush things when a slower method would probably have been wiser. Often it undertook a big push and then had to draw back because of changes in the emergency legislation and the allocation of funds to relief agencies. It is also a fact that many of the capable architects and construction men who represented it in many localities were not effective in public relations. Their careers had been built in lines of activity in which they thought or cared little about public reaction as long as the owner and the financing agency were satisfied.

Where local authorities face the aftermath of these conditions, it would be well for them to emphasize two important characteristics of the present USHA-local authorities program. First, the initiative and a large share of the responsibility for results now lies with the local authority. In the second place, decisions on controversial matters, such as the amount and form of local subsidy, have to be reached before a project is undertaken and not afterwards. The latter is most important. So much of the local ill-feeling toward FWA housing, particularly among municipal officials, stems from the feeling that they were consulted after the fact, as a matter of routine, rather than when the important decisions were being made.

There Is Opposition

Finally, local housing authorities should not be misled by the lack of effective opposition to PWA housing in their communities. It is undeniable that in many localities opposition to PWA undertakings was never fully uncovered. In the early days some groups were heartily opposed to housing, but did not want to go on record against anything that promised to give employment. Later they felt that the emergency building of housing would not be continued long and that their opposition would not be particularly effective with those responsible for the decisions in Washington.

Now there are unmistakable signs that these same groups are beginning to understand the new order of things. They see no stop-gap emergency legislation but a permanent federal agency undertaking to assist permanent local public bodies in a long-range program. Furthermore, these local public bodies need local support and finance. The opposition groups know how to talk to the city hall and to the city council, even if they felt they would not have been particularly effective with Mr. Ickes or the Congress. All this is to say that local authorities have certain obvious advantages in public relations but also, in comparison with a federal construction agency, have some disadvantages. It is good to see that many of them are developing their advantages so intelligently that they seem bound to more than offset the handicaps.

Section V - PROBLEMS OF NEW AUTHORITIES

New housing authorities frequently face special problems. Sometimes the passage of state enabling legislation to permit public housing and the establishment of local housing authorities, is the result of activities of special groups. It is natural that these groups, once the housing authority is established, should expect it to take immediate action along the lines of their particular interests. Often those who engage in a campaign for the establishment of an authority have only a narrow concept of its responsibilities and possible program. In fact, the housing authority is often represented as an agency that will cost the local government nothing, will obtain federal funds for the city, and will stimulate local employment.

The authority comes into being, in such a case, with certain limitations already imposed upon it. It is fearful of asking the local government for any appropriations for administrative expenses, unless these appropriations are to be loans repayable from future funds available to the housing authority. If they are loans, there may be a sense of immediate obligation to develop a project financed by the United States Housing Authority in order that loans from the local government may be repaid out of dwelling rents, project development loans from USHA, etc.

As long as the authority is identified solely with the development of a project utilizing USHA assistance, its success is measured solely by the speed with which it develops such a project. Therefore, not only the original sponsoring group, but the members of the local government and the general public, are apt to have little patience with the authority when they find it spending time to study such questions as the best methods of eliminating substandard housing through use of police power; the best uses of tax delinquent lands; or the repair and rehabilitation of dwellings, rather than demolishing such homes and replacing them by new construction.

Avoid Identification of Program with Early Experience

Opposition to a local public housing program is often based on the belief that it will result in the construction of certain types of buildings or the utilization of certain building methods that are entirely foreign to the local practice. Thus the mere suggestion of a housing authority calls to mind (for a certain portion of the public at least) visions of the mammoth Karl Marxhof development in Vienna or large apartment type developments such as those used in New York City. A local authority should from the outset point out that a public housing program does not necessarily involve following any of these prototypes or even following the type of building (or adopting the rent levels) common in the early FWA Housing Division projects.

As the variable rent levels and the different types of design and construction being used in the current USHA-aided program become apparent, it will be easier for local housing authorities to point out the opportunities that exist for solving local problems in the manner best suited to local conditions.

Cooperation with Other Agencies

If the organization and budget of an authority are limited so as to compel concentration on the development of a few projects utilizing USHA grants, the development of proper contact with other official agencies may be difficult. For instance, an authority may feel that it does not have the time or the funds to develop proper relations with the welfare and the regulatory agencies of the local government, or with the local or national representatives of other agencies which have responsibility for other aspects of housing problems, such as the Federal Home Loan Bank Board, Federal Housing Administration, and Farm Security Administration. The authority may find itself doing just one job, and frequently asking other official and unofficial agencies to come to its assistance in that meagre program, without being able to reciprocate these favors in useful ways for lack of knowledge of the programs these other groups have in hand.

Relationship with Welfare and Housing Inspection Agencies

Particular attention might well be given at the outset of a public housing program to the relationship between the housing authority and public welfare agencies. Some early understanding should be reached on such points as:

1. Eligibility of recipients of public relief as tenants in public projects.
2. The relationship of rent payments or rent budgets allowed by public welfare agencies to the rentals in public housing projects.
3. The relative responsibility of housing and welfare agencies for (a) production of housing of a minimum decent standard and (b) the source and amount of income necessary to obtain housing of this standard.

The development of a feeling on the part of a public welfare agency that the public housing program holds little for its clients naturally leads to a much more serious division in the public mind between the work of a housing agency and the welfare agency and may go so far as to even sanction the entrance of the welfare agency into the housing field. Leading administrators in public welfare certainly have no desire to engage their agencies in the production and management of housing. Certainly public housing agencies must not so circumscribe their own programs as to force the public welfare agency into the housing business in order to care for its own clients.

The equivalent elimination requirements of the United States Housing Act and the necessity for correlating the minimum standards adopted by the housing authority with the standards used for the regulation of housing will bring a housing authority in close contact with the local agency in charge of housing inspection. The housing authority might do a good service to the building inspection agency and to its own cause by pointing out the reason for the failure to eliminate housing in the past by exercise of police power. The publicizing of obstacles to the demolition of slums in the past will do much to justify the authority's program and to explain why the building or housing department has not been more successful. In cases where a new authority finds considerable opposition to the development of housing projects on vacant land, it is especially important to point out the difficulties of demolition prior to construction of new dwellings. A friendly housing inspection agency can give helpful testimony in such a situation.

Competition - with Whom?

Authorities struggling for recognition in their early days are too apt to place the blame of poor housing conditions upon other groups in order to establish the necessity for their own existence. Thus the building industry or real estate groups are accused of failure to provide housing for any of the low-income classes. In a strict sense, private enterprise cannot be accused of having failed to provide such housing, as it never has seriously attempted it. Certainly the selling of houses to families who cannot possibly afford to purchase them does not represent a serious attempt to produce housing for the low-income class. With proper care in the establishment of rental levels and the selection of tenants, public housing can be limited to the class that is not in the market for housing produced by private enterprise. It might be pointed out, therefore, that public housing is not stifling activity in this field for the simple reason that there has been no activity in this field.

As an authority begins to study its problems, it will realize more and more how stupid it is to blame our present difficulties on any one group. Probably the ancestors of present real estate men and housing officials were equally responsible for the mistakes in planning, financing, and control that have all combined to constitute our present housing problem.

First Contacts

Most new authorities will probably have their first contact with the public when they undertake land acquisition and relocation of tenants on sites to be cleared. Negotiations with many of the owners of slum sites, especially resident owners, raise many questions of direct public relations. The press is constantly on the watch for human interest stories and the account of some poor widow who is being evicted from her life-long home and paid a mere pittance always makes good copy. The selection of land acquisition officers who are not only shrewd bargainers, but also have a sympathetic understanding and a way of dealing in a friendly manner with prospective sellers, will do much to minimize the amount of adverse publicity connected with land acquisition. A number of authorities have found it worth while to make initial statements about their policies in land acquisition and to point out that they are attempting to treat every owner as fairly as possible and still are not allowing the housing authority to be exploited.

Common complaints that offers, options, or the appraisals of the housing authority for real property fall below assessed valuations or first mortgages should be met by pointing out that this very frequently happens in ordinary private practice, especially in blighted or slum areas. The average sale price on properties valued at less than \$30,000 sold in the city of New York during 1938 was only 70.4 per cent of the assessed valuation. While such a situation may constitute a bad commentary upon assessment practices, it certainly does not behoove a local housing authority to assume the responsibility of making good in hard cash the discrepancies between actual market conditions and any theoretical values established either by poor mortgage practice or poor assessment technique. Many owners will be willing to concede that actual cash in hand, even though less than the amount of the theoretical values, is worth much more than any of these values. The publicizing of actual awards lower than claims of owners in condemnation

procedures is sometimes helpful; especially if the award is determined by a jury of property owners.

The authority should not overlook publicizing the payments made directly to the local government for back taxes assessed against property that is purchased for a housing development.

Tenant Relocation

It is important for an authority engaged in the clearance of a slum site to explain to the public that the families displaced are not simply being cast upon the mercies of the general real estate market or "driven" from their homes. The various types of assistance, including listing of available quarters, actual assistance in moving to those families who are on public relief, and the recording of new locations of families in order that they may be considered as tenants for the new development, should all be explained to the public.

Some record comparing previous and subsequent accommodation of displaced tenants may serve to show that the lot of the tenant has at least not been made worse by being displaced from his original dwelling. Such records might also be used to refute the rather common accusation that the forcing of tenants from slum areas into other areas simply creates slums in the new areas.

The New Orleans Housing Authority made a study of all families on two of its slum sites to determine eligibility for residence in the new projects. It will be able to explain later that the failure to rehouse many of the displaced families in the new development is due to choice of the families for residence elsewhere rather than ineligibility. The success of the authority's public relations is further indicated by the following account of tenant relocation:

"Possibly the most notable instance of public cooperation was the support accorded the relocation of tenants residing within the Magnolia and St. Thomas project sites. Approximately 1,500 families were removed to new addresses. This evacuation took place, in the case of the Magnolia project, where nearly 900 families were living, in less than 40 days; and in the case of the St. Thomas project, nearly 600 families were handled at about the same rate of speed. Various groups of citizens assisted in this mass migration, which was accomplished with a minimum of confusion and discomfort, despite the fact a shortage of houses existed of the type needed. At no time during the exodus did any major unpleasantness arise."

Temporary and Borrowed Employees

Housing authorities have often found it expedient, especially in the early days of their organized existence, to struggle along with various employees, temporary, volunteer, or loaned by other agencies. Many have utilized personnel made available by the Works Progress Administration or the National Youth Administration. Such expediences make it very difficult for the authority to build up a permanent staff organization. They certainly defeat every effort to stimulate an esprit de corps, which is so useful in carrying on a long-term program of community development. Accepting help

from whatever source is a common cause of subsequent embarrassment. It may lead to the selection of permanent employees who are scarcely fitted for the task and whose presence will operate to exclude persons of specific competence.

In the matter of housing authority policies and operating practices, the early acceptance of donations and personal services may lead to situations which are hard to revise and quite embarrassing to explain to the public. Every effort should be made to assure that the authority will select its executive officer and principal staff members in such a manner as to be fully responsible to the authority through its own payroll. In this manner, the true position of the executive officer at once becomes apparent. That employee, whether he be a man or woman, is likely to become the greatest single asset which the housing authority has. A competent person in this situation may well influence the work of the housing authority in such a multitude of ways as to extend far beyond the scope of this report.

Too strong a plea cannot be made to "sell" the authority to the public as a housing agency competent to do a community-wide service for many groups of people under varying circumstances by utilizing a multitude of facilities, sources of finance, business practices, and in every way constituting an over-all housing agency.

Section VII - ANNUAL AND OTHER REPORTS

The annual report of a housing authority ordinarily presents one of its most promising and at the same time most difficult opportunities for fostering public approval, particularly in a limited group of people such as public officials and professional groups as well as business interests in the housing field whose professional opinion of the authority is of great value.

In considering the use of the annual report as a general public relations instrument, however, it is imperative first to make sure that the report is fulfilling its primary function and meeting its formal and legal requirements as defined for each individual authority. In some cases, it will be found that these requirements can be satisfied and in addition, the report can be so designed as to form a clear and interesting exposition of the authority's activities for direct approach to a limited audience and for indirect approach through newspaper stories and editorials to the general public.

In most cases, it is probably more effective to separate the two objectives. This can be done either by preparing a separate formal report and a popular, expository report, or by putting the two together in the form of a general summary with technical appendix. The particular method will be determined by the local conditions for each authority. In any case, the preparation of the report material designed to tell the story to the public obviously calls for analysis from the standpoint of the ideas stressed in Section III under the headings, "Be Specific" and "Make It Human". Masses of undigested statistics are largely unreadable by nontechnical audiences, but the facts and figures properly interpreted will give a punch to the argument that no amount of generalizing can do.

In addition to the annual report, authorities will have occasion when specific jobs are to be done, such as selecting tenants, to issue official publications. These can be made an important part of the public relations program if they are prepared from the viewpoint of the long-range objectives of the authority and with attention to the basic technique of approaching the public. Some well-written reports, educational publications of various types, are illustrated in Appendix B.

Need for Study of Official Requirements

NAHO's Committee on Public Relations of Authorities recognizes the need for some study and possibly correlation of the requirements embodied in legislation and administrative orders pertaining to reports. It is likely that such requirements dealing with time, form, and content of reports could be adjusted, where necessary, to render one report of a local public housing agency suitable for a number of official agencies entitled to it. Efforts to achieve such uniformity would appear to be particularly worth while in situations where reports to local, state, and federal agencies are required.

PUBLIC RELATIONS FOR LOCAL HOUSING AUTHORITIES

BIBLIOGRAPHY

There are not many publications on the subject of public relations and publicity and among those which are available only four or five refer specifically to the methods of outlining a public relations policy and of handling the various mediums of publicity. It is for this reason that the foregoing report has been prepared -- to at least attempt a specific analysis of special considerations in the housing field which may be applied by local authorities. However, the following bibliography is presented in order to indicate source material for other viewpoints, such as professional public relations counsellors, sociologists and political scientists, newspaper men, and the public.

Government Publicity, by James L. McCamy, University of Chicago Press, 1939. 275pp. Price \$2.50.

How To Do Publicity, by Raymond Charles Mayer, Harper and Brothers, 1933. 258pp. Price \$3.00.

How To Get Publicity, by Milton Wright, McGraw Hill Book Company, 1935. 226pp. Price \$2.00.

Press Agency, by Charles Washburn, National Library Press, 1937. 153pp. Price \$2.00

Pressure Groups and Propaganda, by Harwood L. Childs, American Academy of Political and Social Science, Philadelphia, 1935. 287pp. Price \$2.50. Paper edition \$2.00.

Propaganda, by Edward L. Bernays, H. Liveright, 1928. 159pp. Price \$2.50.

Propaganda, Its Psychology and Techniques, by Leonard W. Doob, Henry Holt, 1935. 424pp. Price \$3.60.

Public Contact Training; Public Relations Series-P.R.2, American Management Association, New York City, 1931.

Public Relations in Business, by Milton Wright, McGraw Hill Book Company, 1939. 346pp. Price \$3.00.

Public Reporting, by the National Committee on Municipal Reporting, Municipal Administration Service, 1931. 158pp. Price 75¢.

Planning Public Housing Literature, Memphis Housing Authority, 264 North Lauderdale Street, Memphis, Tenn., 1940. 11pp.

Municipal Public Relations, Elton D. Woolpert, International City Managers' Association, 1313 E. 60th Street, Chicago, Ill., 1940. 50pp. Price \$1.00.

(In preparation for summer of 1941) Informational Publications; a manual for the use of local housing authorities; United States Housing Authority.

APPENDIX A

RELATIONSHIP OF USHA INFORMATION DIVISION
AND LOCAL HOUSING AUTHORITIES

by Charles E. V. Prins,
Director of Information, USHA

The idea of decentralization, one of the essential elements of the entire USHA program, is also the chief characteristic of the public relations policy of the USHA Information Division. Our aim in this field may be defined along the same lines as that of our general housing policy; namely, to render to local housing authorities technical advice and assistance in order that they may develop effective local programs.

The educational and public relations job, quite as much as the architectural construction job, must always remain primarily a local undertaking. Each local authority possesses far more complete and accurate information concerning the public relations problems in its community than any central office can possibly obtain. And in this field particularly a thorough knowledge of local conditions is essential to success. By keeping in constant touch with scores of local programs, however, the USHA Information Division is equipped to serve as a clearing house for ideas and techniques.

By studying successful local programs over a period of several years we have reached certain general conclusions concerning the procedure which may be most usefully followed by local housing authorities in their information work. Such work can be grouped roughly under the following categories: Press, Exhibits, Speakers, Radio, and Literature.

Press

The USHA Information Division concerns itself entirely with national housing news. It is the responsibility of the local housing authority to establish good working relationships with the local press, and to make sure that the representatives of the press are kept currently informed of all housing developments. Each event in the development of a housing project -- from the survey stage through construction to occupancy -- should be regarded from the point of view of its potential news value, and the local authority should give the press every cooperation in covering these events.

Exhibits

Although certain exhibit materials are available in Washington, and may be secured upon request, the most important part of any exhibit is the local material. Pictures of local slums and of completed projects, models of projects, locally-designed posters and other art work -- these should comprise the largest section.

Speakers

In the larger communities especially some form of speakers' bureau is usually desirable, and in all communities speakers perform a valuable

function in educating the public concerning the facts of the public housing program. Here, again, it is sometimes possible and desirable to supply speakers directly from Washington (to handle technical discussions, for example), but for the most part reliance should be placed on leading members of the community -- prominent professional people, business and labor leaders, and other outstanding citizens.

Radio

As in the case of the press, good working relationships should be established with local radio stations, and every effort should be made to obtain radio coverage comparable to newspaper coverage. All ceremonies (such as cornerstone layings, dedications, "open houses," and the like) should be broadcast whenever possible. Dramatizations are an effective medium in bringing home to the people of any community the reality of local slum conditions.

Literature

A considerable amount of local housing literature already exists, much of it excellent in form and content. The USHA Information Division is now planning a Manual covering these local publications, and they will therefore not be treated in detail here. In general, however, it may be said that they should be inexpensive, attractive, and readable jobs, professionally written whenever possible. The "question and answer" type of publication should be part of the stock in trade of all local housing authorities.

In conclusion, it cannot be too strongly emphasized that the problem of public relations for local housing authorities is by no means a "selling" or commercial type of undertaking. It is part, rather, of the general trend towards improved public reporting, a trend which grows stronger each year with all governmental agencies, be they Federal, State, or local. It is becoming more and more clearly recognized that the taxpayer has a right to the fullest and clearest account, at periodic intervals, of how his tax money is being spent for public purposes. To achieve this in relation to housing is the final aim of good housing public relations.

Because of the educational and social nature of this work, it must be performed on the professional level. In certain cases an authority member, or a staff member, is qualified to perform these duties, but in most instances it is desirable to retain a person with professional background in this field. Every authority understands the need for an architect, engineer, or lawyer to handle special technical aspects of housing. Only when public relations are seen as an equally technical and significant aspect will properly qualified personnel be retained, and the best work accomplished.

APPENDIX B - SAMPLE EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS

The following nine pages show samples of local educational publications. It is interesting to note that most of the earlier material has been prepared by unofficial citizens' housing organizations rather than by local housing authorities.

Those of the publications that are available for distribution are listed below in the order of their appearance in the Appendix.

"Facing the Housing Problem," Milwaukee Housing Council, Mariner Tower, Milwaukee, Wisconsin. February, 1938. 48pp. Price 10¢.

ABC Book, Metropolitan Housing Council, 228 North La Salle Street, Chicago, Illinois. 1936. 27pp. Price 25¢.

Report of Women's Housing Committee, 1938. Syracuse Housing Authority, 301 East Washington Street, Syracuse, New York. 1938. 24pp. mimeo. Price 15¢.

"All Together!", St. Louis Foundation for Neighborhood Improvement, 1210 North 8th Street, St. Louis, Missouri. 1939. 20pp. mimeo. Price 5¢.

"Better Homes; for Cincinnati's Children." Citizens' Committee on Slum Clearance and Low Rent Housing, 312 West 9th Street, Cincinnati, Ohio. May, 1939. 12pp. illus. No charge.

"Primer of Housing," by Arthur C. Holden. Workers Education Bureau Press, Inc., 1440 Broadway, New York City. 1927. 48pp. Price 35¢.

"From Bad Houses to Good Homes; second annual report, Housing Authority, City of Charlotte." 831 Seigle Avenue, Charlotte, North Carolina. January 1, 1941. 30pp.

"Public Housing Comes to Akron; enlightened self interest moves Akron to get rid of its slum districts." Akron Metropolitan Housing Authority, 31 North Summit Street, Akron, Ohio. 1940. 12pp.

"Rebuilding Atlanta; second annual report." Housing Authority of the City of Atlanta, 515 First National Bank Building, Atlanta, Georgia. June 30, 1940. 24pp.

"Housing, City of Austin, 1938-1939; report of the Housing Authority of the City of Austin," 302 Chalmers Street, Austin, Texas. 1940. 30pp.

"Your Children Like These Low Rent Homes, Cedar Central Apartments." (Project announcement) Cleveland Metropolitan Housing Authority, Housing Center, West Mall Drive, Cleveland, Ohio. 1940. 6pp.

"The Answer is YES --- The Answer is NO." The Housing Authority of the City of Hartford, 525 Main Street, Hartford, Connecticut. 1940. 1pp.

"Facts about Hammond's Low-Rent Housing Program." Hammond Housing Authority, Room 320, City Hall, Hammond, Indiana. 1940. 8pp.

"49 Questions and Answers about the Housing Program in Macon." The Housing Authority of the City of Macon, 1100 Oglethorpe Street, Macon, Georgia. 1940. 5pp.

CINCINNATI'S PROGRAM FOR SLUM CLEARANCE AND LOW RENT HOUSING

Questions and answers

The A. B. C. of LOW RENT HOUSING IN BUFFALO



Eligibility Requirements
Rent Schedule
How to Make Application

BUFFALO MUNICIPAL HOUSING AUTHORITY
2001 CITY HALL BUFFALO, N. Y.

WHAT ABOUT NEW HAVEN SLUMS?

A Statement by the
HOUSING and RESEARCH

PEOPLE'S CONFERENCE on HOUSING and PUBLIC HEALTH

An Invitation

To the People of Connecticut and their Organizations:
Government and private citizens

recent years
advan
That c
fact; th
been re
set up by

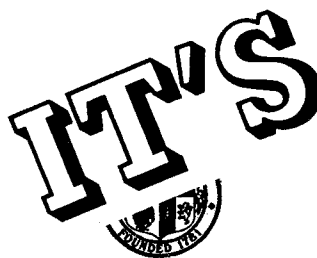
More on
"How bad
"What not

To contribute to the answering of these questions, the Citizens
Housing Councils of Connecticut and the Connecticut Conference
on Social and Labor Legislation are planning a Conference to be
held Saturday, June 3rd in Room 110, Sterling Chemistry Labora-
tory, 225 Prospect St., New Haven, Connecticut.

Every organized group is cordially invited to send a delegation.

WHY PUBLIC HOUSING

QUESTIONS and ANSWERS



THE NEWARK HOUSING QUIZ

30 Questions & Answers
To stimulate inter-
housing and to s
of the present

ent
75

of Education

Miss, Chairman
ing Council of Newark

published by
Citizens Housing Council of Newark

Clean Out the Slums ...
Build Better Homes for Flint ...
Provide Jobs for Our Citizens ...
Save the Taxpayers' Money ...

VOTE "YES" on March 6th
for the Better Homes Referendum.

Your "YES" vote will help to

- Eliminate slums and unsafe housing
- Prevent disease, crime, juvenile delinquency, and their expense to the city
- Safeguard your home from the spread of blighted areas
- Stop wasting taxpayers' money on slums
- Eliminate city losses due to tax delinquency
- Provide new, decent housing at low rentals for families who now suffer from high rents and bad housing
- Provide employment for Flint citizens
- Achieve real economy of government for Flint

Will This Cost the Taxpayers Money?

NO! No part of the cost of this building program will come out of the city treasury. There will be no obligation whatever upon the city to pay either interest or principal of the money which is to be loaned by the United States Housing Authority.

Mayor Comins recently stated that there would be no increase in taxes if the Flint Housing Commission was allowed to go ahead on this housing program with the help of the USE

HOUSING AUTHORITY of the CITY OF LOS ANGELES 1938



HOUSING TODAY

A SERIES OF THREE LECTURES AND DISCUSSIONS
1. THE PRESENT SITUATION
2. PROPOSED SOLUTIONS
3. MEANS OF ATTAINMENT

1. WED., NOV. 17—8 P.M.
2. THUR., DEC. 2—8 P.M.
3. WED., DEC. 15—8 P.M.

ADMISSION: 50 CENTS for the SERIES
SPEAKERS: R. J. HUBBARD, R. M. SCHINDLER, GORDON WHITNALL,
SAM YORRY, CHAIRMAN; RUBY BOROUGHS
MOTION PICTURES AND EXHIBITS
AUSPICES: LOS ANGELES CHAPTER
FEDERATION OF ARCHITECTS, ENGINEERS, CHEMISTS AND TECHNICIANS



MASS MEETING AND CONFERENCE
CATHEDRAL OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE and SYNOD HOUSE
Amsterdam Avenue and 110th Street, New York
FEBRUARY 28 - MARCH 1, 1937

From Chapter I -- HOUSING SHORTAGE
 "The Association of Commerce issued a report of its research bureau on January 8, 1938, showing that only one new home had been supplied for each 15 new citizens of the city since 1930....15,976 new families with no homes available for them under ordinary conditions."

From Chapter II -- HOW MILWAUKEEANS LIVE
 "In an analysis of furnished rooms between the lake and the river. . it was found that forty-seven families each live in one furnished room; 29 families have no water in the room; 18 have no toilet on the same floor. Thirty families live in two rooms; half of these have more than one child. Twenty families have no water in their rooms; eight families have no toilet on the same floor!"

From Chapter III -- SUBSIDIES FOR SLUMS
 "Subsidies to slums are a big part of the mounting cost of local government. How increased cost of government arises from the slum areas has been shown by studies made by Dr. Philip H. Person. Three local areas of about the same population were chosen. Area 1--underprivileged. Area 2--middle class. Area 3--privileged.

	1	2	3
% County Population	4%	4.4%	3.1%
Juvenile Court Cases	100	8	5.
Municipal Court	60	21	18
House of Correction	110	1	2

From Chapter IV -- WHO WOULD BENEFIT?
 "Extensive experience, then, and not theory, leads us to expect that the community as a whole will benefit to the extent that the source of so much crime, delinquency, immorality, disease and poor citizenship are eliminated and decent homes built to replace hovels."

From Chapter V--WHY AREN'T THE PEOPLE HOUSED?
 "'Almost all of the residential building in Milwaukee county...has been for families of above-average income. No low-cost housing has been provided, except the cutting up of existing buildings into smaller units."

From Chapter VI -- HOW CAN THE PEOPLE BE HOUSED?
 "Milwaukee will now have to take the responsibility for planning, building, renting and operating decent housing for low income groups. The Federal government will help by cutting down the cost of financing, which is a big factor in building, and by lending and contributing money."

FACING THE HOUSING PROBLEM

By
 Clarence Senior
 Secretary
 MILWAUKEE HOUSING COUNCIL

MILWAUKEE HOUSING COUNCIL
 Mariner Tower
 Milwaukee, Wis.
 February, 1938

From Chapter VII -- HOW MILWAUKEE CAN BUILD LOW-RENT HOMES --
 "A Milwaukee Housing Authority must be created. Neither the common council nor any existing municipal agency, is legally able to carry on a housing program."

From Chapter VIII -- WHAT WILL THEY COST?
 "The city would lose no more on the project than the taxes that were paid on the old rat-holes, plus the annual subsidy of \$14,000. Therefore, the city would make a 'profit' of the differences between the taxes on the new structure and the total of the old tax plus the per room share of the \$14,000 annual subsidy."

From Chapter IX -- PUBLIC HOUSING AND PRIVATE BUILDERS --
 "Only a policy which takes all of these aspects of the housing problem into account, which calls for co-operation from all agencies dealing with planning, zoning, building inspection, health, safety, sanitation, education and recreation, and calls for an increased income level for workers will contribute toward a final solution of the present chaotic and dangerous situation."



The
Queensbridge and Red Hook
Housing Projects of
the New York City
Housing Authority

A HOUSING TALE OF TWO CITIES

LONDON AND NEW YORK



TOWARD THE END TO BE ACHIEVED

Past, present and future developments of the New York City Housing Authority are covered in these publications -- which are just three of a series of public relations pamphlets which they issue throughout the year.

All Together!

"St. Louis Blues" is the title of the first chapter of this pamphlet. The point at issue is: will St. Louis be another Ghost City? The situation is vigorously outlined with federal clearance and low-rent projects with federal money, as well as rehabilitation through private capital, recommended as the city's only hope of recovery. Available at 5¢ a copy through St. Louis Foundation for Neighborhood Improvement, 1210 North 8th Street, St. Louis, Missouri.

St. Louis Foundation for Neighborhood Improvement

Report of Women's Housing Committee

1938

A new approach to housing problems has been taken by the Syracuse Housing Authority. A Women's Housing Committee was appointed for the express purpose of giving advice and opinions on housing plans. In this report of their 1938 activities, the Committee covers all phases of housing, including homemaking, education, architectural, general and publicity. This being a "first-year" publication, the only concession to the masculine point of view is found on the last page of the Executive Director of a statement from the Executive Director of the Authority. Copies available at 15¢ each through the Syracuse Housing Authority, 301 East Washington Street, Syracuse, New York.

Syracuse Housing Authority
Syracuse, N. Y.

WHAT IS THE CINCINNATI METROPOLITAN HOUSING AUTHORITY?

A public body of five citizens, Stanley M. Rowe, Chairman; Charles H. Urban, Vice-Chairman; Mrs. Simon Kuhn, John

B. Spilker and Fred Hock. A state law provides for their appointment. They serve without compensation.

WHAT MORE DOES THE HOUSING AUTHORITY PROPOSE TO DO?

1. To complete Laurel Homes by adding 264 dwelling units.
2. To go ahead with another slum reclamation project in the West End.
3. To build enough low rent homes on vacant land to prevent a shortage of low rent housing.

The Authority now has a contract with the city to build about 20,000 square feet of low rent housing. A page from a public relations booklet circulated in the City of Cincinnati, Ohio. Available at no charge through the Citizens Committee on Slum Clearance and Low Rent Housing, 312 W. 9th St., Cincinnati, Ohio.

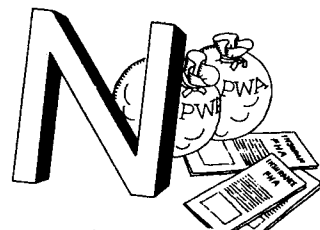


XYZ

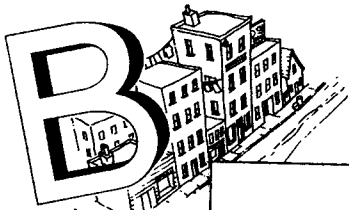
ABC



DILAPIDATION
WHICH CAUSES THE BLIGHT-
THE NEED FOR REPAIRING-
AND CAPITAL'S FLIGHT.



N IS NATIONAL
HELP IN OUR FIELD
BY INSURANCE AND SUBSIDY
LOW RENT HOUSING TO YIELD.



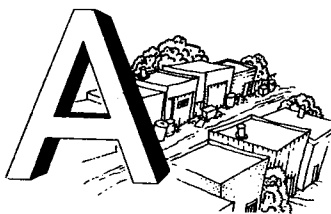
B COVERING LARGE
OUR MOST SERIOUS
CAUSING PLANNING

Blight is economic
small property holding
general wave of neighbor-
try though he may, pro-
ing from the force of
are further
tion. He

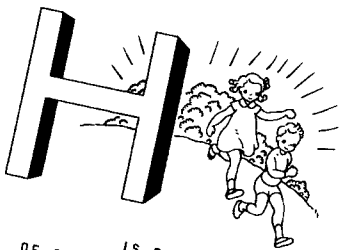


G UR GARBAGE
M TO REAP.
ALL,
HEAP.

tion are essential
the slum areas are
ch services and in-
indifference re-
backwards being
diamond throw, on a
"What you hear
al housekeeper

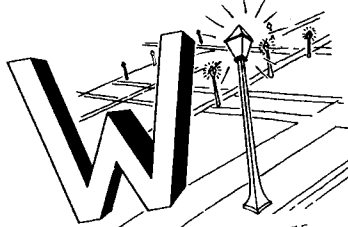


A IS FOR ALLEYS
RUNNING BACK OF OUR LOTS
WASTING SPACE



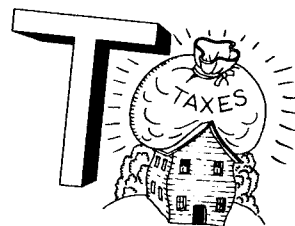
H IS FOR HEALTH
OF GREAT CIVIC CONCERN
MEANS GOOD SANITATION,
LIGHT, AIR, SO WE LEARN.

HHealth of our city depends not only on its doc-
tors, its hospitals and clinics, but on getting
rid of disease-breeding factors, of which bad hous-
ing is of prime importance. Contagious diseases
flourish where "sanitary facilities" is a misnomer
for hopper toilets and primitive disposal.
Infant mortality rates in Chicago's worst district
are three times higher than in good neighborhoods.



W IS FOR WASTE
OF THE LAND IN OUR TOWNS;
WE'VE SPREAD OUT SO FAR
WE HAVE LAMPS ON THE DOWNS.

Waste of immense sums, of both private and civic
origin, occurred in the rapid growth of Chicago.
Recognition of this fact is the first step in any
housing program. We have built at great cost the
splendor of our lake front and boulevard develop-
ments and at greater cost have neglected our homes.
We must now take the step necessary to salvage what
we can from the carelessness of the past so as to
develop and to enjoy more fully the future city.



T IS FOR TAXES
AS SURE AS YOUR DEATH
WEIGHING DOWN REALTY'S
GASPING LAST BREATH.

Tax burdens are the lament of reality - we have
an ad valorem tax which has been the means of
an unconscious conspiracy between City Hall and
private property. Highly speculative anticipated
valuations and a rising market were desirable and
acceptable to private property to stimulate sale
and to the taxing officials as the basis of a levy.
The change in the direction of values has brought
financial chaos to both the owners and the city.

A simple, attractive
little book--the key
letters are in red;
the sketches and jin-
gles clever. Compiled
and distributed by the
Metropolitan Housing
Council, 228 North La-
Salle Street, Chicago,
Illinois. 25¢

NEW YORK

A CITY OF CONTRASTS FORCED BY RAPID CHANGES IN LAND VALUES

The people live (1925):

1/2 in Old Law Tenements

Built before 1901.

566,303 Flats or 35.7%

1/2 in New Law Tenements

5 stories or higher.

546,281 Flats or 34.4%

1/2 in One and Two Family Houses or Converted Dwellings.

475,306 Suites or 29.1%

New York began to feel the pinch of high land values sooner than other American cities. Congestion brought intolerable conditions to light sooner. There



CHICAGO

Originally a City of UNREGULATED GROWTH, recently famous for its progress in PARKS, CITY PLANNING, and ZONING.



The people live:—

33% in Apartments

188,260 Suites

32% in Two-Family Houses

183,000 Suites

24% in One-Family Houses

113,500 Buildings

11% Single Flat-over Stores

182,900 Suites

Outside the Business District of "the Loop", where the fireproof buildings are centered, are Industrial Sectors bordering the railroad.

These are fringed by a belt of old Frame Houses, many surviving from the period of hasty growth following the great fire, some of them Chicago's worst slums. Outside these are small brick and frame dwellings occupied by low-salaried workers.

DETROIT

The RAPID GROWTH OF THE CITY has caused the ECONOMIC USE OF LAND one of its problems.



About 65% of the people live in 1 or 2 family houses.

About 35% in apartments.

A class of houses known as "Income Bungalows" is very popular. The attic is usually rented out to another family.

Many families after purchasing their lots live for a year or two in combination garage and "builder's shack" on the rear alley.

Over \$102,000,000 was spent in 1925 for Residence buildings housing 24,605 families. Over half of this

BOSTON

AN INNER CITY OF BRICK ENCIRCLED BY MILES OF FRAME-CONSTRUCTION



The people live:

20% in old Brick Residences

converted into tenements or rooming houses.

30% in Brick Tenements

built as such.

30% in Frame "3-Decker."

15% in Frame 2-Flat houses.

5% in Single Family houses.

In the North and West Ends the four-story brick houses of the well-to-do, some of them 100 years old, are now occupied by apartments. The narrow streets and alleys are hard to control.

In the South End are substantial brick houses, 50 to 60 years old, occupied as rooming houses and tenements since "fashion" moved to the Back Bay. The old houses lead to BAD ROOM CONGESTION and INSUFFICIENT SANITARY PROVISIONS for the increased population.

In the sections of South Boston, Dorchester, and Roxbury, the frame "3-Decker" built about six feet apart is the prevailing type.

The Law of 1907 checked the building of tenements and forced construction into three-family houses or less which are outside the law; hence expansion over greater areas of land.

Because of the large radiating territory available about the "Hub" city land values have not risen beyond the means of the small home owner. Boston has spread out rapidly in consequence. The Fire Limit has been extended to include the new districts only after they have been built up solidly with frame construction.



II

LAND

"A man born into the world brings with him not one bit of new land on which to live!"

WHAT IS A HOUSING EMERGENCY?



Some people never can afford to have new clothes—yet we never hear of a CLOTHING EMERGENCY.

A Housing Emergency is that which exists when the people who live in a city are not able to obtain adequate housing.

"Primer of Housing" by Arthur C. Holden -- one of the first housing manuals published in this country-- 1927 is the year of issue, six years prior to the first state enabling act for public housing. An interesting source of early housing practice. Available at 35¢ a copy from Workers Education Bureau Press, Inc., 1440 Broadway, New York City.

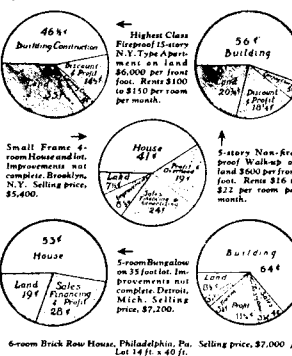
LAST OFF DWELLINGS.

The city has an interest in real estate because it provides and controls streets and public utilities, which permit the owner to use his land. If land is not used to advantage it wastes the resources of the city. When people live in dilapidated houses in congested districts the city's health is menaced. In addition, the public pays for charities and correction.

12

THE CONSTRUCTION DOLLAR:

Shows where the CENTS WHICH MAKE UP EACH DOLLAR OF ORIGINAL CONSTRUCTION COST go to in various types of buildings in different parts of the country.



There are 3 different kinds of expenses in erecting a Building. The Cross hatching shows the number of Cents in each Dollar used to buy Land or to improve it. The dots show the number of Cents used to pay Bankers and Promoters for the Use of their money. The shaded portion shows the number of Cents in each

BETTER HOME SITES AT VERY LITTLE ADDED COST

24 SITES ON CITY LOTS 40' x 120'

on these lots

and inefficiently planned with dark side

and lacking in privacy.

Streets unnecessarily wide and expensive for small homes.

24 SITES ON CITY LOTS 60' x 80'

Houses can have:

Broad front and be well planned with plenty of sunlight and added privacy.

BETTER HOMES BY BETTER PLANNING STARTING WITH A GOOD LOT PLAN

Some total land and lot area put to better use.

Of course main traffic arteries should be wide and paved in the best manner. Money may be saved by reducing the paved areas of residential streets and shortening the sewer and service runs. If land values allow no other way it is possible to give wide frontages by reducing the depth of the lot.

ONE WAY OF REDUCING RENT

Reduce Original Cost

(a) BY ECONOMIES OF CONSTRUCTION

Less waste, more efficiency.

Smaller rooms.

Skippy construction.

Less paid to labor.

They may reduce building cost by 12%, but building cost is only 60% of total cost.

Saving therefore is 7 1/2%

(b) BY USE OF CHEAP LAND

More expense for improvements and transportation. May cut original land cost 50%.

Land is 25% of total—but add 10% for improvements. Saving therefore is 2 1/2%

(c) BY GOVERNMENT SUBSIDY

If part of cost of local improvements is distributed over whole city instead of being all paid locally it is a virtual government subsidy. Say 5% is saved on local assessments, but, perhaps, 1% is added to general tax rate or a net saving of 4%

These savings may cut original cost perhaps 13 1/2% And Reduce Rents as much as 2 1/2%

Many efforts have been made to reduce original cost but with little effect upon rents. Interest rates and financing charges have been going up all the while so that the little that has been gained has been lost in still higher annual finance charges.

THE HOPE OF THE FUTURE

SUCCESS WILL COME WHEN EVERYBODY UNDERSTANDS THE 7 R's OF HOUSING

We must work for:

REASONABLE MONEY

9% average of Finance Charges must be cut to 6%.

REASONABLE TERMS

The period of amortization must be lengthened and excessive discounts eliminated.

REASONABLE TAXES

Efficient city planning and administration with a fair distribution of the burden of taxation.

REASONABLE DESIGNS

Plans which are the result of experience and scientific facts and not of fancy.

REASONABLE BUILDERS

Increase in efficiency of both labor and administration, with the elimination of waste and speculative risks.

REASONABLE CONSTRUCTION

Scientific construction with the economies of mass production.

REASONABLE PEOPLE

Intelligent understanding of the problems of housing*

The new Housing Science is showing how to create modern, efficient, low-priced homes and finer neighborhoods. When people know what this Housing Science is, they will insist on getting the benefits of it.

Second Annual Report
of Charlotte, No. Car.
Housing Authority.
January 1, 1941
(Actual size 6X9 in.)

from
**BAD
HOUSES**

to

**GOOD
HOMES**

Second Annual Report
HOUSING AUTHORITY
City of Charlotte, North Carolina
JANUARY 1, 1941

Important Events

THE last year has been a fast-moving one, and many important developments in the Housing Authority's program have taken place. Nothing reveals this more clearly than the brief calendar of significant dates which follows.

- January 6 R. Emmett Kerr appointed to Authority by Mayor Ben E. Douglas for five-year term.
- January 23 Nathan Straus, administrator of the United States Housing Authority, visited Charlotte.
- February 8 Bids taken on heaters, ranges, and refrigerators for Piedmont Courts and Fairview Homes.
- March 1 Authority celebrated its first birthday, and first annual report appeared.
- March 6 Resignation of R. Emmett Kerr from Authority because of technicality which made him ineligible announced by Mayor Douglas.
- March 20 Bids taken on 108 additional units for Piedmont Courts.
- March 24 John Tillett appointed to Authority to fill vacancy left by resignation of Mr. Kerr.
- April 2 Edwin L. Jones re-elected as chairman of the Authority, and W. Frank Dowd, Jr., re-elected as vice-chairman.
- April 2 Low bid of .0044 per cent with a premium of \$42.14 received on negotiable temporary loan notes in a total amount of \$1,783,000, resulting in a saving to the Authority of approximately \$25,000.



Public Housing COMES TO *Akron*

ENLIGHTENED SELF INTEREST

MOVES AKRON TO GET RID OF ITS SLUM DISTRICTS

B⁷

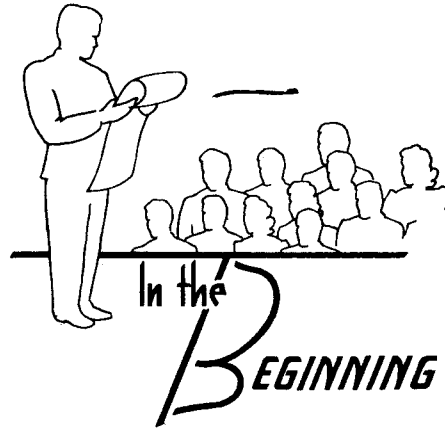
REBUILDING ATLANTA



HOUSING AUTHORITY
OF THE CITY OF ATLANTA, GEORGIA

...
SECOND ANNUAL REPORT
June 30, 1940

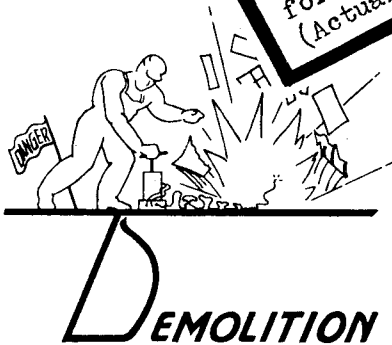
(Actual Size 6x9 in.)



THE CITY Council of Austin, Texas, in a meeting held December 27, 1937, passed a resolution declaring (1) that there were many substandard houses in the City of Austin which rented at figures too high for families of low incomes to pay, and (2) that the need existed for the establishment of a housing authority. Following this action by the City Council, the Housing Authority of the City of Austin, a public corporation, established under the laws of the State of Texas, which is designed to promote the housing of low incomes, came into being. The Mayor and City Council appointed five Commissioners to serve on the Board of Directors, A. J. Wirtz, W. R. Nabours, Hubert B. Jones, E. H. Perry was named Chairman. W. R. Perry, 10, 1939, and was succeeded by James H. Pitts.

Authority, aided by Congressman Lyndon Johnson of Austin, explained to the citizens of Austin the objectives of the Housing Authority. After enlist-

Report of the Housing Authority
of the City of Austin, Texas,
for the years 1938 - 1939
(Actual size 6x9 inches)



THE program of the United States Housing Authority in which the Local Authority is participating stipulates that one substandard dwelling unit must be demolished or eliminated by the Local Authority for each unit that it builds. The Authority is given not to exceed a year and a half after final completion of the projects in which to comply with this requirement for equivalent elimination. The Austin Housing Authority seeks to meet the requirements of equivalent demolition in two ways: first, through the destruction of all buildings on sites purchased by the Authority; and, secondly, through the cooperation of the City of Austin.

AHA Seeks Voluntary Demolition

The Austin Housing Authority demolished 53 substandard dwelling units on the three sites which it purchased. It is attempting, and has been since the beginning of the program through the aid of the Building Inspector and Sanitary Inspector of the City of Austin, to achieve the other necessary eliminations to round out the program. The City, through these agents, helps the Housing Authority to secure credit for the elimination of substandard houses all over the city. These eliminations take place in two ways: either the property owner demolishes a substandard unit and erects another dwelling unit, or perhaps a commercial establishment, in its place, or else the property owner corrects the condition in

(20)

Project
Announcement
of
Cleveland
Metropolitan
Housing
Authority

YOUR CHILDREN LIKE
THESE LOW RENT HOMES

CEDAR
CENTRAL
APARTMENTS



(Actual size 4x8 1/2 in.)

The Hartford Housing Authority States That . . .

THE ANSWER IS

NO

B⁹

Will the lights in the homes built by the Hartford Housing Authority be turned out at a certain time at night?

NO—Each tenant family is allowed an adequate amount of electricity. If the family uses more than it is allowed, it will be charged for the additional amount.

Will the gas for the gas stoves be turned off if the tenant family uses too much?

NO—The family will simply be charged for the amount it uses in excess of what is allowed.

Will the tenants be required to be in their homes at a certain time at night?

Will there be fences around the projects with gates that will be locked at night?

NO—Each tenant family has its own keys to its home and can enter or leave its home or the housing project at will.

Will the members of the Housing Authority staff regularly enter the homes in the project to check up on the tenants and to inspect their homes?

NO—This is the tenant's home and agents of the Authority will not enter except when there is reason to examine the condition of the dwelling or when it needs repairs, additions or alterations.

Will the tenants be denied possession of automobiles and radios?

NO—Parking space will be provided for their automobiles. They will be able to play their radios as much as they please as long as they do not bother other tenants.

Will any special government restrictions be placed on tenant families?

Will the Government be able to force them into military service?

NO—They will be treated just like any other citizens, and are subject to call for military service only as other citizens are.

Will the Authority tell the families (1) when to go to bed, (2) what to eat, (3) how to live?

NO—The homelife of tenant families is their own. If, however, they seek any advice or assistance, the Authority will be glad to give it to them.

Will the Authority refuse to let the tenants have parties or to entertain guests in their homes?

NO—The Authority encourages friendly relationships among tenants or between tenants and families from outside the project.

THE ANSWER IS

YES

Bottom of sheet gives information about when and where for families to apply.

Are families with children welcome?

YES—In fact, families with children are preferred. Play space, swings and spray pools are provided for children.

Are there sufficient laundry facilities for all families?

YES—Tubs and drying space are provided for every family.

Must a tenant family use the stoves and refrigerators provided by the Authority?

YES—Because most families do not own stoves and refrigerators, the Authority has provided this kitchen equipment. Tenants owning stoves or refrigerators may store them in space provided in the projects or may sell them.

Will tenant families be expected to keep their homes and the buildings in which they are located in good condition?

YES—The Authority has built sound, attractive homes and it wants tenant families to be as proud of them as if they were the owners.

Can families be eligible that are not (1) Democrats, (2) Republicans or (3) members of any political party?

YES—Politics plays no part in the selection of tenants. Families will be accepted when eligible according to the laws of the United States and the local regulations.

FACTS

about

Hammond's Low-Rent Housing Program



APRIL, 1940

THE PROGRAM OF THE HAM-
MOND HOUSING AUTHORITY
WITH THE AID OF THE UNITED
STATES HOUSING AUTHORITY

(Actual size $5\frac{1}{2} \times 8$ in.)

"Decent, Safe and Sanitary Housing"

1. Question. How does the Macon Housing Authority decide who is to live in these projects?

Answer. The Authority will rent only to those families who cannot get decent, safe and sanitary homes at a price they can afford to pay. Tenant's income must be enough to pay the rent, but the income cannot be more than five times the rent, including heat, water, lights and gas. The Authority will be glad to tell you how this rule works in your case at the Administration building at 1100 Oglethorpe St.

2. Question. Why is there a limit set on incomes of those who live in the projects?

Answer. To make sure that these homes go to the low-income group who cannot afford to rent decent, safe or sanitary homes.

3. Question. Do I have to belong to any organization or have any "pull" to get into the projects?

Answer. ABSOLUTELY NOT.

4. Question. Are these homes operated or supervised by the government?

Answer. No. The MACON CITIZENS, is in charge of all operations acting in the capacity of your landlord.

5. Question. Can a home lawyer or other
the "pull" to get into the projects?

The MACON HOUSING AUTHORITY

OFFERS

QUESTIONS 49 and ANSWERS

About the Housing Program In Macon

"Decent, Safe and Sanitary Housing"

Actual Size

B¹⁰